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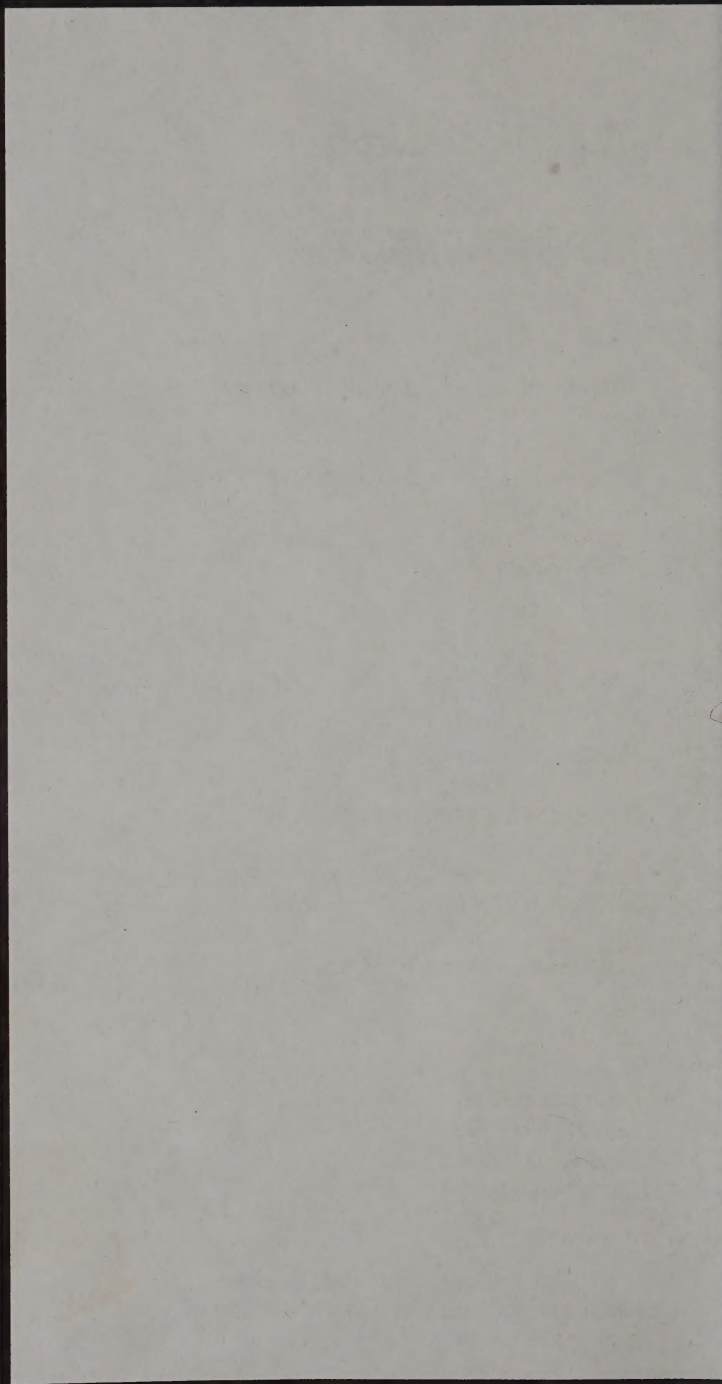
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MEMOIR

OF

PRISCILLA HANNAH GURNEY.

MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

OF

PRISCILLA HANNAH GURNEY.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

SECOND EDITION.

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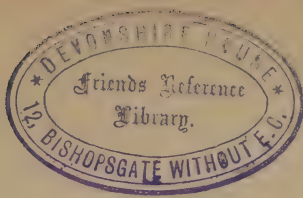
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BRISTOL:

PRINTED BY J. CHILCOTT, WINE STREET.



PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

OUR dear friend, the subject and Author of the following Memoir, has so fully developed her views and sentiments concerning it, both as it respects her motive for presenting it to her friends, and also as it refers to the introduction of some circumstances contained in it, as to preclude the necessity of further information on those points. Probably most readers will agree with her, in admitting the increased interest and more lively impression produced by the communication of religious truths or christian experience, when accompanied by a narrative of outward events and circumstances, than when given in an abstract form: and even had it appeared desirable to abridge or omit some passages of minor importance, the different parts are so connected, and generally so dependent on each other, that this could not have been effected without rendering the mutilation obvious, and in-

interrupting the natural and unstudied flow of her thoughts. Alterations, even of a subordinate kind, have been studiously avoided, that the work might be presented to the reader in its genuine form.

The benevolent motive assigned by the Author, in desiring that the Memoir should be made public, is in strict conformity with her character; the spiritual welfare of her friends and fellow-members being ever deeply interesting to her: and this legacy may be accepted as a proof of such christian and affectionate solicitude. May the result be adequate to her utmost wish!

An attempt to exhibit in this place, a few of the more prominent features in the character of our departed friend, may not be considered as altogether superfluous.

To trace and develope the delicate lineaments, by which P. H. Gurney's character was distinguished, would be no easy task; yet a few points may be desirable: an outline, if it be correct, may be found to assist the reader, in addition to what he shall obtain from the Memoir, in presenting to himself a full-length portrait of the original.

The fine understanding which our friend possessed, was cultivated and improved by early instruction and education, and by the advantages which her station in life afforded; and which procured her the society of persons eminent for intelligence and respectability. This probably tended to promote that enlargement of mind for which she was remarkable: for while, throughout her religious course, she maintained an undeviating consistency with the principles of her own profession, she exercised entire charity and liberality towards the christian of every other denomination. Her person and manners were peculiarly pleasing; and for affability and condescension she was conspicuous. She possessed an unusual degree of sweetness, gentleness, and refinement, blended with such an agreeable mixture of animation, as rendered her eminently attractive and engaging. Indeed, in her was displayed a remarkable combination of the gentlewoman, the christian, and the friend; and this pervaded her whole conduct and deportment: it was not assumed as an occasional dress; it was her every-day garb. And here a trait, well worthy of observation, must not

be omitted; that of tender consideration for the feelings of others, evinced in various ways. On occasions of communicating cautionary advice or remonstrance, it was accompanied with so much mildness and kindness, as generally to win the respect and love of the party addressed. Among her many excellent endowments, was the unwearied exercise of benevolence in behalf of suffering humanity. In this cause it may be truly said, she was laboriously engaged, even through the latter years of her life; continuing to plead for the widow and the fatherless, nearly to the latest day of it.

The regular occupation of her time was exemplary; being rarely unemployed, unless when suffering from increased indisposition: and this, probably, contributed much to enliven many hours of her long confinement, which she bore with cheerful submission to Him, whose will and service had constituted her chiefest pursuit and aim, during so large a portion of her earthly career.

In the cultivation and maintenance of friendship, P. H. Gurney exhibited a bright assemblage of excellent and amiable qualifications; in which

she has been seldom surpassed, and not often equalled. Constant, ardent, and faithful in attachment; earnestly persevering in the endeavour to serve her friends; exerting her influence to shield them from censure; ever ready to participate their joys, and especially qualified to sympathize in their sorrows.

But, after the perusal of the Memoir, it will be readily allowed, that what conferred on her character the greatest value, and shed over her many excellences the highest lustre, was, that she possessed the "one thing needful;" "the pearl of great price." For, having been, through adorable mercy, enabled to overcome those obstacles, which had so long opposed the attainment of it, she became the steady disciple of a crucified Lord. She renounced the allurements of the world, and the elegances of life to which by birth and habit she might have been considered entitled, for the narrow path of self-denial; regarding it to be for her the road to the kingdom of purity and peace; consistently with the declaration of the Lord Jesus; "whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

The perusal of the subsequent Memoir, it is apprehended, will occasion the wish for some particulars of the last years and concluding moments of the beloved friend who is the subject of it.

The very delicate state of her health, which is adverted to in the last chapter of the Memoir, continued much as it had been during several preceding years; and with the exception of occasional interruptions by an accession of disease, to which she was peculiarly liable during the last eight or ten years of her life, she retained the capability of pursuing her accustomed occupations of reading and writing, with remarkable facility, until within a short period of her decease.

The extreme susceptibility of her lungs rendered every change of temperature hazardous; so that it was only in the warmest weather, she could venture to expose herself to the external air; when, a few times during the summer, she enjoyed the exercise of a wheeled chair. This necessity of confinement precluded her from the privilege of attending meetings for public worship; a circumstance not unfrequently alluded to by our dear friend, with as much of regret, as the state of

cheerful acquiescence, in which she was remarkably preserved, would admit.

She derived much pleasure from the society of her friends in a select manner, as many of them can testify; and the animation excited on those occasions, often gave them a too favourable impression of the state of her health; for much exertion of her voice was almost invariably succeeded by an increase of suffering, and sometimes to a serious extent.

The lively interest she had been accustomed to manifest towards her friends, as well as in the general concerns of the Society, continued unabated during this season of seclusion. And at those times, when the family were assembled for the purpose of reading the scriptures, which generally took place in her apartment, her ministerial communications, which were not unfrequent, were lively and edifying; so that it may be truly said, that through the blessing and grace of Him, in whose service had been her delight, her sun went down in brightness.

It was but little more than two weeks previously to the termination of her life, that an increase of

disease appeared. Its advance was, for some days, so slow, and interrupted by such frequent alternations, that those around her were not adequately impressed with its threatening tendency; and it was only during the last few days of her life, that they relinquished the hope of her recovery.

Advertence to the great uncertainty of her life, was habitual to our dear friend, in her least suffering condition; being fully aware of the frail tenure on which it seemed to depend; and during her last illness, she made repeated allusions to it: yet it did not appear, that in the early part of it, she had any clear view as to its termination, or apprehended that the important change was so near as it proved to be, until within a short period of its approach.

On the evening preceding her dismissal, she expressed rather an earnest desire for the presence of an intimate friend; and testified much satisfaction on her arrival. She appeared to possess her intellectual faculties in a remarkable degree; and even at this late period, evinced her habitual consideration for others, by advertence to their

accommodation ; expressing a desire, that her attendants might not remain with her during the night. This she was favoured to pass in quietness, and did not appear to be in much pain ; was frequently dozing, and continued to take supplies of nourishment. Early on the following morning, the friend above alluded to, again came into her apartment ; when she repeated several parts of hymns that were appropriate to her state. On being asked if she was in suffering, she replied, “No, rejoicing !” On advertence being made to prayer ; that it was a time to be so engaged ; she rejoined, “And in praise :” and when a passage of scripture was recited, she repeatedly lifted her hand, in testimony of her concurrence with it.

Her disorder, being inflammation of the lungs, rendered much exertion of the voice difficult ; but the few expressions that passed her lips, were very consolatory to those around her ; evidencing that her heart was fixed, trusting in God. With almost her latest breath, with a faint and indistinct voice, but with an accent of confidence, and with much sweetness approaching to melody, she many times repeated the name of her Saviour ; “Jesus ! Lord

Jesus! Come; yes, quickly! Blessed Jesus! Dearest Jesus!" thus evincing, that He who had been her Alpha was, in infinite condescension, proving himself to be her Omega.

The difficulty of breathing increased for a short time, which was sustained with entire calmness and composure, until about eleven o'clock in the forenoon; when (as it is believed, in the full possession of her understanding) she peacefully expired, on the 17th of the 11th Month, 1828. The interment took place on the 26th. The meeting held on the occasion, was numerously attended by those of our own Society and others. It was signally favoured and solemn; and many testimonies were borne to the efficacy of that grace, by which she was what she was; as well as vocal exercises of prayer and thanksgiving.

Thus, by the removal of this beloved friend, which includes to her, we cannot doubt, a blessed exchange of the sorrows of time, for the ineffable glories of eternity; her relations and friends, as also a widely-extended circle of acquaintance, and the church in general, have sustained an inexpressible loss. May those who thus feel it, be

animated by the remembrance of her bright example, to press with increasing earnestness and stedfastness, toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus ! Amen.

THE EDITOR.

BRISTOL, *4th Month 22nd*, 1834.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE following Memoir was printed several years ago: since which period the Editor has received numerous applications from persons wishing to possess a copy of it. It has not been in her power to gratify this request; and considering it, as she does, a serious trust committed to her by the Author, she was not satisfied to be the means of withholding it from those to whom it might be beneficial; and therefore she has concluded to issue a reprint.

The Editor may be perhaps allowed to repeat the earnest desire, that the deeply instructive experiences recorded in the work, may be eminently blessed to the reader.

9th Month, 1841.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

A DESIRE has often arisen in my heart, which, I believe, is common with those who have deeply partaken of the mercies and judgments of the Most High, to preserve a record of remarkable experiences; and thus to erect, as it were, a stone of memorial, that should testify unto others of his faithfulness and truth. But to discriminate accurately between what is really conducive to this end, and what may be only prompted by a disposition, which is naturally prevalent, to communicate too freely on subjects allowably interesting to the individual, is not always an easy task; nor will it perhaps be found more easy, to produce a detail of important occurrences, however truly described and worthy of serious attention, but may furnish occasions of objection, on the part of many readers, to different passages of such a

work. How earnestly to be desired and humbly sought after, is therefore a portion of that wisdom, which is profitable to direct, and which only is sufficient to preserve or to restrain a writer, thus engaged, from erring as on the right-hand or on the left: not indeed to secure such writer, from the probability of incurring censure, from some who may be too hasty to judge of what they understand not, but from administering just cause of discouragement to the well-inclined yet inexperienced reader; or of offence to the more zealous seeker after truth in the love of it; and, still more, from the danger of holding forth any thing like a license "to continue in sin that grace may abound."

The writer of the following pages has long been deeply aware of difficulties, of the foregoing description, so closely besetting an attempt to exhibit, to public view, the extraordinary passages of her spiritual experience, that she has been much disposed to relinquish it. But feeling a fresh spring to flow in her heart, which, she humbly apprehends, proceeds from the fountain of pure love, towards those, in an especial manner, who, like

herself, have wandered far from their heavenly Father's house; and though mercifully invited and powerfully solicited to return, have miserably turned even further aside, and through continued rebellion, may have long dwelt in a land of drought and famine, as to all spiritual nourishment, and been captives also to their soul's cruel enemy: if any such as these, (though even in a condition resembling that of Jonah, when he said, "the earth with her bars are about me for ever," &c.) may be hereby induced to look again towards the Lord's holy temple, by being made acquainted with the efficacy of redeeming power, in the instance of one, upon whom the pit of despair appeared to have shut its mouth; how richly would the travail of her soul be satisfied in exposing scenes and circumstances, which otherwise might have been better buried in oblivion! but which are well calculated to confirm the consolations set forth by a deeply-exercised and experienced servant of the Lord, viz. "The creature cannot fall so low, but there is help in the nature of God concerning him, though there may be none in any revealed promise."

I will only add, by way of apology for the subsequent performance, that if it should appear liable to exception from another cause, viz. its descending to many particulars of outward situation and circumstances, not essential to its most important object, the motive of the writer has been, to render it more interesting to that class of readers, who would not be engaged by a mere abstract account of religious experiences, though they might be readily conducted to the contemplation of them, when thus connected with outward events.

I trust I shall also be excused, if I embrace the present opportunity of expressing a sentiment, which has been long impressed on my mind ; viz. That although the Morning Meeting may be justly considered as the valuable guardian of that unity of publicly-avowed doctrine, which ought never to be infringed by professed members of our religious Society ; I have been ready to doubt its obligation to exercise so much of a disposition to make alterations, as has at times been manifested, as to the eligibility of any peculiar style or object pursued by the writer, if not in any degree inconsistent with the main object of its consideration.

INTRODUCTION.

As often as I have been led to take a retrospective view of some remarkable passages of my life, and of the wonderful dealings of a gracious Creator towards one, who knows herself to be unworthy of the least of his mercies ; an inclination has arisen in my mind, to preserve a written memorial of them ; for the instruction and warning, for the comfort and encouragement, of others. But fear has also often discouraged the attempt ; lest the disclosure of so much weakness and unfaithfulness, accompanied with the enumeration of forfeited mercies so often renewed, might operate to strengthen the presumption of any, to pursue the like course of reiterated disobedience, in the fallacious confidence of restoration to divine favour. Yet when I consider, that such restoration was never afforded, in my experience, without a depth of suffering and bitterness of repentance,

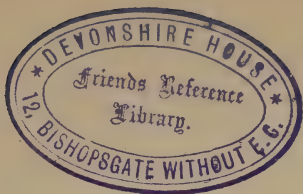
proportioned to the nature and extent of the deviation from manifested duty, I am induced to attempt the task ; with an earnest desire, that it may prove a means of guarding the inexperienced from the like snares and sufferings ; and that those, who may have unhappily incurred them, even to the like degree, so as to be reduced to a state of helpless, hopeless distress, in which they may be unable to lay hold on any revealed promise ; may also be hereby encouraged, to look again and again towards the Lord's holy temple ; yea, perseveringly to wait upon him, through every besetment and seeming opposition, until favoured to witness that effectual help, which remains to be laid upon One who is mighty, and able to save, to the very uttermost, all those who come unto God by him.

I know, indeed, that the capacity to look with an eye of faith, and to apply to that power which is able to save and to redeem, is not of the creature, nor at its command ; yet if there remain but the sincere will, thus to look and thus to apply, the long-suffering of God will be happily witnessed to lead to that repentance which is his gift.

Thus, through deep and fiery baptisms, qualification may be attained to praise the Lord for his goodness, his wonderful works to the children of men ; and, finally, to sing the song of the redeemed, whose garments are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

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MEMOIR
OF THE LIFE AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE
OF
PRISCILLA H. GURNEY.

CHAP. I.

BELIEVING it right for me to leave, in writing, some memorial of the remarkable experiences of my life, and of the gracious dealings towards me of a long-suffering and most merciful Creator, I commence the solemnly-affecting task in the sixty-fourth year of my age.

I was born in the city of Norwich, on the 22nd of the 6th month, 1757, of parents who had a birthright in the Society of Friends, and who were descendants of such as had been eminently instrumental in the support and propagation of its principles and testimonies. My father was the youngest son of Joseph Gurney, of whom honourable mention is made in the "Testimonies of Public Friends deceased;" and my mother the granddaughter of Robert Barclay, the apologist. Her parents, viz. David and Priscilla Barclay, and also

Joseph Gurney

my mother, Christiana Gurney, were respectable and mostly very exemplary characters; of which it may be no impeachment to observe, that their endeavours, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, were not crowned with fully corresponding effects, during an early period of the lives of my dear parents. They were, indeed, a youthful couple, when they entered into the matrimonial covenant; my father being about twenty-five, and my mother not quite seventeen. She became the parent of two daughters, of whom I was the eldest, before she was twenty. Distinguished by endowments personal and adventitious, and early introduced into the zenith of temporal prosperity, they appeared to have had little experimental acquaintance with the discipline of the cross, or the life of true religion. Nevertheless, its fundamental principle was not without its evident operation on their minds; being indicated in the instance of my father, by remarkable tenderness of spirit, and much benevolent and compassionate kindness towards his fellow-creatures, and also to the brute creation. The like was discoverable in my mother, by her early attention to the duties of her station; endeavouring to form the minds and manners of her children, according to the principles and practices of rectitude, so far as she felt their obligation on herself. But opportunity of exercising the talent of right education, which she possessed

*Priscilla H
Christiana*

in an eminent degree, was very limited before the decease of my affectionate father. This event took place in the sixth year of my age. Its immediate occasion was a malignant fever, with which he became infected by his assiduous attention to me, in whom the disease first appeared, and proceeded to affect my mother, sister, and a servant. Before my complete recovery, I was given to understand the grievous privation we had sustained, which plunged me, young as I was, into deep though silent grief; the recollection of which has been probably the more lasting, because it was accompanied by the first impressions I ever received, concerning the reality of a state of existence and felicity after death; this truth being judiciously intimated to me by the domestics in the nursery, to assuage my sorrow, and to soothe their own.

What might be the real state of my dear father's mind, under the awful prospect of so sudden a transition from time to eternity, I had no opportunity of learning. The solemn event of his being called from the enjoyments and flattering prospects of the former, to the realities of the latter, became an impressive lesson to many survivors; and I trust it was sanctified to himself, through the mercy and merits of him who came to seek and to save those who were lost.

It was during the severity of my dear mother's illness, that this deeply-afflictive dispensation took

place, which was succeeded by an humbling visitation of divine grace on her mind ; the operation of which was manifested, by her relinquishment of many of the vanities in which she had formerly delighted ; and especially, in an earnest concern for the welfare and happiness of her children, who were now become her sole and immediate charge. Two worthy uncles, paternal and maternal, who were our guardians, were indeed her efficient coadjutors and counsellors ; but it is peculiarly to her own excellent agency, that I have to ascribe a privilege, which demands my gratitude to the author of all our mercies ; that of witnessing the way prepared in my mind, by the establishment of her mild yet steady authority, for the reception of immediate divine instruction, and the exercise of submission thereto.

Widely and deplorably as I have deviated from the path, thus clearly opened to my understanding, the beneficial effects of this privilege have never been so far lost, as ultimately to fail of its operation ; that of calling forth those two most powerful principles of our nature, love and fear, as the spring of all those actions, for which we are accountable, whether to our Maker, or subordinately to those whom he is pleased to entrust with a portion of authoritative influence : I mean, the fear of offending the object of our love, from whose favour and approbation our highest satisfaction is derived : fear,

not induced by undue severity ; the greatest penalty inflicted on her children, being that of some hours' banishment from her presence ; and a love, which was cherished in our hearts by a most judicious exhibition of kindness, mixed with discretion and firmness. Thus I may observe, that the witness for truth in my own heart, and the dictates of maternal love, both in the restraints and encouragements exercised towards me, according to the propensities discoverable in my temper and conduct, were so truly in harmony with each other, that they acted with a two-fold force : and this I apprehend to be the true principle of that important province in education, which extends towards the formation of the human character, in its religious and moral capacity. Although it is of unquestionable utility, to the attainment of the same great end, to store the youthful mind with information on religious subjects, and to direct it to the source of divine intelligence, as revealed through the medium of sacred scripture ; there appears to be an elementary work, the commencement of which should take place with the earliest dawn of intellect, and continue to keep pace with its progressive development, till the human subject may be considered as an independent agent, so far as respects parental interposition. The work alluded to, is that of watchfully checking the appearance and growth of every evil seed, or propensity of that nature, which is at

variance with the perfect law of the Lord: and bringing into subjection and ready obedience, passively rather than actively, the will of a child to the dictates of the rightly-regulated will and enlightened judgment of a parent; who, if truly worthy of that honourable character, will not violate the law of pure love, in its restrictions or requisitions.

To return to the detail of this subject, as exemplified in my infantile experience, I may further observe, that thus the reproofs and incitements of maternal concern, like the index of a well-regulated machine, kept a certain relative pace with the motions of the monitor within, in the regulation of words and actions, the suppression of passions and tempers and habits, which, without such vigilant superintendence, might have become predominant, before the principle of divine truth had been raised into dominion over them. But there is a province, which appears to be inaccessible to human instrumentality, except when immediately directed by a more than human power; that of the thoughts and inmost inclinations of the heart; which is only pervaded in its most secret recesses, by the Spirit of the Lord. Of the omniscience of this Spirit, of its contrariety to sin, and unity with all virtue and holiness, I was endued with a very early sensibility and conviction; even before I remember to have read any portion of the scriptures, except some little of the historical part of the Old Testament,

and some small portion of the Psalms ; certainly before the age of seven years.

Previously to that time, I had been judiciously exercised, by a person whom my mother had taken into her family, soon after her widowhood, to assist in the education of her children, in learning to repeat some hymns and serious poems ; the favourable effect of which, I increasingly experienced, in their turning my attention to such subjects ; though I think they scarcely amounted to what might be called devotional pieces ; of the impression of which kind of subjects, my heart, or at least my taste, was early susceptible.

About the eighth year of my age, a young cousin came to make us a visit, and having with her a little book, containing some of the best forms of prayer I ever met with, and adapted to the state and comprehension of children, I readily betook myself to learning and repeating them, after being put to bed at night, and before I rose in the morning. Having, however, been in the habit of attending meetings, and consequently a witness of the occasional performance of that solemn engagement, not only in the understanding, but under the immediate influence of the Spirit also, a question arose in my mind, whilst uttering the language of devotion, and that not without some corresponding feelings, is this a prayer like that I have heard from my cousin Edmund Gurney ? who was indeed an

eminently baptizing minister in our society; and it was quickly followed by the conviction, that it was something very short of his experience.

Continuing, however, the nightly and morning practice of retiring, as into the closet of my heart, to repeat with more or less feeling, as it was afforded me, at least the Lord's prayer, I was at length arrested, as I well remember, after uttering the clause, "Thy will be done, &c." with such a sense of the divine power and presence in my soul, as caused me willingly to remain a considerable time, in the silent enjoyment of it. By renewals of this precious experience, I attained to the knowledge of that true prayer, which may be performed with or without the medium of words, according to the dictates and mediation of the Spirit of Christ, which only can enable us rightly to cry, "Abba, Father." I note these particulars, with the view of drawing the attention of parents and teachers to the adoption of the best modes within their capacities, of introducing the minds of children to an acquaintance with this most important duty; one of which I take to be, their being made conversant with the objects, sentiments, and language, of true prayer, as they may be found in holy record, and selected from other approved sources; as also in many unexceptionable compositions, in the form of hymns and spiritual songs.

Previously to this acquaintance with the nature

of true prayer, I received a portion of religious instruction from my dear mother, which I had never before distinctly apprehended; viz. the eternal existence of the Deity; his knowledge of all our thoughts, words, and actions; our responsibility to him for the same; in connection with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul after the death of the body, and of a state of future rewards and punishment.

I believe this effort of religious concern was accompanied by an influence beyond that of merely maternal affection, from the deep yet tranquil impression it made on my mind; and which, after some months, I endeavoured to extend to four little cousins of mine, all younger than myself; taking them one at a time, for the express purpose of imparting to them something of the greatest consequence. They received the information with seriousness; yet I perceived at that time, and had further occasion afterwards to observe, that neither did they, nor did my dear sister, who was indeed nearly two years younger than myself, appear to possess the same degree of religious sensibility that was thus early awakened in my mind. From thence I have since taken occasion to consider, that different individuals are very differently dealt with, as to the time, manner, and degree of the visitation of divine light and life to their souls; and that, in order to the different purposes of their future

designation ; although I am fully persuaded, that every son and daughter of fallen Adam receives, sooner or later, such a measure of the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, as shall be sufficient, if duly embraced and improved, for their final salvation.

Possibly, indeed, that divine Spirit, which is the purchase of the Son of God for mankind by his mediatorial process, as universally as they are partakers of the effects of Adam's transgression, may operate in some subjects so secretly, so like the leaven hid in the three measures of meal till the whole was leavened, as to be, for a considerable lapse of time, not distinctly perceived by the individual, or discerned by others, except by its fruits ; though I have no doubt, it will ultimately be recognized to proceed from the nature of him, who is styled the Angel of the Covenant, and who will finally manifest himself to have been with them, even all their life long. Can we mistake, in attributing to this its secret operation, such an influence on the affections as is sometimes exhibited in an almost infantile state ? not only in the unequivocal expressions of joy and love, but even of a love which expands to the preference of another before itself, and an evident perception of peace or sweetness in the result ?

Such instances may not be very common or numerous ; the selfish principle being that which first

unfolds itself, and is generally too much nourished by persons about children. Wherever the contrary can be perceived, or induced, it ought surely to be tenderly cherished, that a taste of its genuine fruits, even in the infant mind, may thus tend to exalt and enlarge the smallest degree of spiritual capacity. For is not the disinterested love one of another, a product of the same principle, whence proceeds the love of God? and can this be any other than a measure of his nature infused into the soul?

I will only add to this digression, by observing, that an exemplification of the correctness of the foregoing observations I have often considered my beloved sister; whose childhood exhibited a remarkable example of the most amiable and christian dispositions; as those of love, charity, sympathy, disinterestedness, sincerity, and truth. But I must not omit to observe in this place, that though strongly susceptible at times of the like dispositions myself, rather as duties than habits, in my own mind, there was a great want of simplicity in my character, a great deficiency of correctness in my conduct, and especially such a difficulty of confining myself to sober truth or fact in my relation of interesting circumstances, that though I do not remember ever to have told a deliberate falsehood, my imagination failed not to embellish or distort almost every event or transaction under my notice.

This inveterate propensity was not overlooked by my watchful mother ; and the sacred Monitor within failed not to make me sensible, not only of the unlawfulness of all misrepresentation, but especially of the secret indulgence of those flights of imagination, which could furnish food for every corrupt disposition of my heart. These however were chiefly employed in the fabrication of pleasant and engaging pictures.

From the afore-mentioned promising beginning, it might perhaps have been reasonable to expect, that those buds and blossoms of piety would have ripened into early fruit. But, alas, the soil of the human heart, however capable of the reception of the precious seed of the kingdom, is also luxuriant in productions of another nature ; which, in those who make the most favourable progress in the life of righteousness, is attended with considerable conflict between flesh and spirit, and often with many backslidings, through yielding to those temptations both from within and from without, which are incident to our mortal state.

Perhaps the most powerful, as well as the most insinuating, to which I was constitutionally prone, was the before-noted unrestrained indulgence of imagination ; a faculty so excursive and creative, that it seemed to supply to me the want of every desirable reality which I was capable of receiving ; and which was not only employed in expatiating

on chimerical prospects of pleasure, but in fabricating romantic combinations of events and circumstances, for the purpose of entertaining, and even sometimes with the notion of instructing, my younger companions.

I have since thought that such a propensity would have been best corrected by furnishing this active principle with more suitable materials to feed upon. The knowledge of facts or truths of an innocent or instructive description, like those abounding in natural history, geography, astronomy, and also in such parts of profane history as are adapted to store the memory with useful information: at all events, the being exercised in realities, or in fictions of the simplest and most instructive forms, as parables or allegories, I believe to be a point of importance in the education of youth.

My dear sister and myself were about this time left much to ourselves, in consequence of the ill health of our beloved mother requiring the constant attendance of the person whom she had procured to be our instructress. Prohibited the company of servants from our earliest childhood, and even that of companions of our own age, except occasionally that of our near relations, none of whom lived within twenty miles of us; we were trusted to perform our tasks of reading and spelling to each other, and working at our needles according to daily direction, without the superintendence of any one; and

such was the effect of the good principles and habits previously instilled, that we rarely if ever abused this confidence.

To remedy the want of sufficient attention to our improvement, two successive governesses were engaged; neither of whom fulfilled the office much to the satisfaction either of our mother or ourselves; they being but little under the practical influence of true religion, or of that sweetness of spirit which is a fruit of it. The last person brought us acquainted with the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which was profitable and highly interesting to us both. This, with the scriptures, with which we had long been conversant, and a good collection of pieces in prose and verse, on moral and religious subjects, called the *Christian Magazine*; which particularly recommended itself to my favourable reception, from the circumstance of its having been procured by my still dearly-remembered father; constituted the chief of our childish studies, which might have been more extensively pursued, under proper direction, with much advantage.

The impressions made on my mind by every sentiment of real piety, which I was able to imbibe from these and some other select productions, continued to be influential; and being seconded, or perhaps anticipated, by the dictates of the sacred Monitor in my own breast, which not only gently guided me to the knowledge and love of truth, but

also often made itself known as a swift witness against the evil which continued to present itself; my spiritual condition became increasingly hopeful, about the tenth year of my age; when I was, at times, given to perceive a distinction between what was pleasing to the Lord and what was not so, to a much greater extent than I apprehended myself at that time called upon to make manifest; seeing I was at the disposal of a parent, and not accountable for some things in which she thought proper to train me. Nevertheless, there was left to myself an important field for exercise, in the subjection of the secret dispositions of my mind to that pure principle, which was opposed to all vanity and folly, as well as to the malignant passions; from which latter I was much exempt; particularly from every inclination to cruelty, the least infliction of which by others on sensitive creatures, and indeed all kinds of suffering which I could comprehend, rendered me susceptible of such acute distress, as often to induce a belief, that there could be no torment I should not be willing to endure, if it might be the means of rescuing others, especially those I most loved, from any continued misery; and if it would please the Almighty to make me sensible, that what I should then endure would be effectual to their relief, and not an effect of his displeasure, if I suffered in their stead.

Could such thoughts be infused into the mind of

a child by any thing less than the spirit of Jesus, thus disposing and preparing it for a participation in the nature of his own sufferings, which are said to remain to be filled up by his faithful followers, for his body's sake, which is the church?

To so high an origin, I should be more doubtful of ascribing another principle, which was nevertheless somewhat profitably impressed on my heart; viz. an apprehension that my real inward state was cognizable to my pious ancestors deceased; and even to those who were still in the body, and other truly good people; so that, under the sense of divine approbation, I seemed also to partake of the joy I ascribed to them when it was well with me, and to feel the disconsolate influence of that distant separation from them, which I believed increased whenever I yielded myself to the prevalence of evil.

Soon after this period, my mother having resisted some inviting opportunities of changing her condition, from motives of pure affection for her children; yielded to that of entering into the married state with her first-cousin I. F., which accordingly was accomplished after the manner of the Church of England. This circumstance opened the way to a greater departure from simplicity in our dress and manners, and occasioned the removal of our residence, which had been either at Norwich or Yarmouth, into the vicinity of London, and in the neighbourhood of my mother's still surviving

parents and other near relations, viz. Bush Hill ; a spot beautified by nature and high cultivation, being ornamented with gardens, paths, and groves, which became for more than two years, a sphere of innocent delight to her children ; and as it afforded the opportunity of our being attended by masters in various branches of learning, and fixed with a respectable and well-informed person in the capacity of governess, though not of our own Society, we seemed thereby to enjoy some increasing advantages : yet well do I remember, that my state of mind in this situation, sustained some loss ; and that upon the whole, the growth of the evil seed overspread the good, in the indulgence of desires after forbidden things ; yet not wholly to the choking of the latter, which was even, at times, mercifully called forth into some dominion.

My active mind having imbibed a notion, which had been insinuated by a person in the family, that the outward rites of baptism, of confirmation, and the supper, were still obligatory, agreeably to early scriptural practice, I expressed it to my kind father Freame ; who instantly referred me for satisfaction to the writings of my great-grandfather. Accordingly, at the age of thirteen, I betook myself to reading the Apology ; and though with an imperfect understanding of some parts of it, yet with much force of conviction ; particularly in reading the second proposition, on immediate revelation.

To this, in my infantile measure of experience, I could fully subscribe, and became confirmed in this fundamental principle of Friends, as well as in the truth of his views of the fallen state of man and of universal saving light. Hence I had no desire further to pursue these subjects of discussion ; taking it for granted, that all the results proceeding from such first principles, must be good.

The birth of a brother, which took place in Norfolk, was the occasion of the temporary removal of our family thither ; and the subsequent illness of my father induced my mother, after several lesser excursions, to accompany him in making a tour on the continent ; leaving us under, what they considered, suitable care. My sister and myself, with our governess and another female friend, remained at our agreeable home with the servants, and the carriage for our use ; one object of which was, that we might have a conveyance to visit weekly our brother, who was placed under the care of an uncle and aunt, at whose house we also had the attendance of a dancing master with my cousins.

During this period, the cultivation of the fruits of the Spirit by no means kept pace with the progress of intellect and the pleasures of imagination ; the latter being, I think, injudiciously encouraged, by the indiscriminate reading of Pope's works and other English poets. The writings of Milton,

especially his *Paradise Lost and Regained*, had a more salutary effect.

I may here note, that having liberty to read the most approved novels, I did not decline the indulgence, though fully sensible of their unfavourable tendency, in proposing at best, very imperfect examples of christian virtue in its purity; and in cherishing those dispositions, which had need to be subjected to the power of the cross; namely the love of admiration and a taste for romance or adventure. I concluded that, were I a mother, no daughter of mine should have my sanction in such a practice: thus are judgment and conduct often at variance.

Soon after the return of our parents, my father's illness increased to a distressing degree; and my sympathy was deeply awakened on behalf of my dear mother, of whose secret grief I was frequently the unsuspected witness, while the companion of her nearly sleepless nights. Her attention to all the duties of a wife could not, I think, be surpassed; some of which were peculiarly arduous. Considering our home, as not altogether the proper place for that improvement of her daughters, which she constantly kept in view, our mother was induced to send us to a boarding school, out of the Society of Friends, where some of our cousins had been placed with supposed advantage.

The vanities in which we were allowed to participate, and those of which we were witnesses in this place, as well as the great want of pure principle, in the degree in which we had been brought under its influence; had neither a pleasurable, moral, or profitable effect upon us: yet through providential care, and the force of impressions imbibed in early childhood, we were much preserved from the contamination of many evils, and considered at school as models of rectitude. But the pure principle did not gain that increasing ascendancy over the corruptions of my heart, which might have been witnessed in a sphere of action more favourable to its growth.

While thus situated, we received an account of the decease of our father, and, shortly after his interment, a summons to attend our mother, who was then in Norfolk; and after a few weeks, and the subsequent return to school for a few months longer, we were again permitted to return, and join our widowed mother at our house at Bush Hill: a privilege, which though embraced with pleasure, was not unmingled with sadness, even in leaving school; where our attachments had become strong and mutual, with several individuals.

But that which more sensibly imbittered to me the prospect of a continued home station, was the probability I perceived of two events, much deprecated by my judgment and feelings; that of

my mother's final relinquishment of our place of residence, which in my view embraced all that was desirable both for pleasure and benefit, being as in the bosom of our friends and relatives ; and also, of her being ultimately prevailed upon to enter into a matrimonial engagement, with a most respectable character, but not of the Society of Friends. It was not, however, for me, a girl of fifteen, expressly to avow my objections, which being keenly felt, were not I believe wholly unperceived by her.

Many conflicts, I am persuaded, the contemplation of this prospect cost my poor mother, who did not soon acquiesce in it. She concluded, however, to remove with her three children and female companion, to Bath ; a step indicated to her by the state of her health. This removal was most reluctantly submitted to by me, to whom it proved an introduction into evils, which I will not dare to say, have yet ceased to operate in some of their remote effects ; although a just appreciation of the sufficiency of divine grace, both for preservation and restoration from them, requires me to acknowledge, that this also has been abundantly extended in every needful time : so that, wherein it may have failed of its mercifully-designed effects, the deficiency is ascribable only to the want of that *true faith*, which comprehends both mental and actual obedience ; which still can remove mountains, and, without which, it is impossible to please God.

We were now distantly separated from such society, as would have been most likely to confirm religious impressions; and although not immediately plunged into the vortex of dissipation, by which we were surrounded, my beloved sister and myself were permitted to share in its contamination; my mother having so far relaxed from her former principles of wholesome restriction, as to conduct us to places of public diversion, under her personal guardianship.

An ill state of health, proceeding from violent cold, imposed restraint in these particulars; and the opportunity of attending meetings, which were not wholly neglected, proved an occasion of awakening those religious sensibilities, which I felt to be of more value than the most alluring objects of time and sense, and witnessed their efficacy in disentangling me from the bondage of such snares.

Nevertheless, a renewed sense of peace and of my heavenly Father's love was rarely vouchsafed, except through a process of mental suffering, which often induced a reluctance in coming to this baptism of repentance; though the delay would certainly augment the pain and difficulty of so doing. Being at one time prevented from going to meeting, and having each received from our only paternal aunt, a present of William Penn's "No Cross, no Crown," my sister and I concluded to read in it, at the suggestion of my mother's companion.

Though the task was undertaken, and for a time proceeded in, with the greatest repugnance on my part, the perusal was at length accompanied by such a powerful conviction of the truth of the doctrines enforced, that in yielding my mind thereto, it was so replenished with the evidence of peace, as to leave no doubt that the standard of self-denial thus exhibited, was that to which I must ultimately conform, if I would ensure to myself those effects of righteousness, which are quietness and assurance for ever.

I remember also that when about fourteen years of age, being with my sister, spending a school vacation at the house of my honoured uncle, David Barclay, and having the opportunity of hearing the preaching of Samuel Fothergill and Sophia Hume; I became persuaded, from the influence attending my mind, that the doctrines they preached and the principles they exemplified, were those which I was also called to embrace; whether only in a private capacity, or more openly, as might be required.

Our continued residence in Bath, from the age of fifteen, and subsequent excursions, first to the Hotwells and Clifton on account of my health, and afterwards to the sea-side in Devonshire, were productive of nothing further worth remarking, except that these situations affording opportunity for our increasing acquaintance with our mother's

suitor, who was mostly of the party, the excellence of his character and strength of his attachment, with his kind attention to my sister and myself, in promoting our useful studies and innocent recreations, so subdued any reluctance in our minds to look towards his nearer relationship, that we became his advocates with my dear mother.

She had many hesitations to overcome ; and, among them, the unwillingness to set us the example of marrying out of the Society. Our love for her and esteem for her friend, induced in each of our minds the resolution, that we would never take the like step. Accordingly, when temptations of such a kind were presented, to which our after-situation peculiarly exposed us, by frequent association with accomplished and engaging characters, the friends of our father-in-law ; I could only admit the romantic idea, of being able to convince them of the truth and rectitude of Friends' principles.

This danger was, however, counteracted by vigilant precautions on the part of our parents, who failed not to apprise the young men of principle, who frequented the house, that any connexion with us would break the domestic peace of the family, and expose us to the censure of our religious Society ; a consequence, however, which my mother had escaped in both her marriages, being tenderly visited but not disowned. Our dangers and our

trials were not a few, but the affectionate kindness and sympathy of our parents, who omitted nothing they judged to be conducive to our real happiness, tended to reconcile us to every disappointment.

Another excursion into Norfolk afforded me some renewed opportunities of spiritual visitation, through instrumental means; especially, in attending a meeting, rendered memorable to me by the impressive ministry of Sarah Morris, from America.

About the same time, it was my practice; no doubt from the secret attractions of the good Spirit; when perceiving my mind somewhat estranged from the sense of that love, which, even in these early days, alone constituted my true happiness; to retire to some place of seclusion and read the holy scriptures; and at some such seasons, the sacred truths of which they testify, were so sweetly and forcibly impressed on my soul, that in proportion as I yielded to the reception of them, it was covered with peace and joy in believing.

On returning to Bath, we were indulged to take home with us, a young woman to whom we were much attached, the sister of our late governess, to become the elder companion of our studies and recreations, who continued with us ten years. We had also the privilege of masters in various branches, to perfect us in what had been previously attained, as the knowledge of the French and Italian languages, and geography: the art of drawing, which

I consider the most innocent and eligible among the imitative arts, we had dismissed in favour of another, to which our indulgent mother yielded her consent at a former period, at our earnest request, that of music; which, though a strong natural taste and something of a talent for it, rendered such a cultivation the more desirable to us, was not attended with much present or future satisfaction. Its utter insufficiency towards harmonizing the mind and manners, was so strikingly exemplified in the master, who instructed us in this art both vocally and instrumentally, and the effects of pursuing it, on my mind at least, were so far from commending it to my conscience as the companion of my best hours, that I was convinced of its irreconcilable contrariety to the highest exercises of pure devotion: yet, as the influence of the latter was far from being constant or frequent in my mind, I continued to yield to this fascinating employment, though often made painfully sensible of the vapid, unsatisfied state in which it left me.

During this period, from the age of sixteen or seventeen or more, I was not forsaken of my heavenly Father, who sometimes gently recalled my soul from all my wanderings after sensible delights, and so fixed it in a state of secret silent dependence on himself, as rendered it again susceptible of the sense of his favour, which I felt to be better than life. At these seasons, such

was the ascendancy, given me to experience, over the corruptions and entanglements to which I had been subjected; and such my elevation of spirit over all that was mundane and perishable, that I was enabled to enter into covenant with him, somewhat after the manner of Jacob; that if he would thus be with me, in the way in which he might be pleased to lead me, giving me this heavenly food to eat and this heavenly raiment to put on, he should be my God, and I would follow him whithersoever he would be pleased to direct my steps. Yet as nothing very distinctly was presented to my view to be done, I believed my fidelity was chiefly required to be exercised, in the submission and resignation of my heart and will; which, at one season especially, were so unreservedly offered, through the grace afforded, and so memorably was the sacrifice owned and accepted, through the overshadowing of divine favour, that I then concluded, should any thing now be suffered by me to induce the breach of this covenant, or to act in opposition to the divine counsel, and the truth of that immediate revelation or communication with the Father of spirits, to which I was so graciously admitted, I could never expect restoration to his acceptance, but should deserve to become a cast-away from his presence for ever.

Such experiences were like the putting on of that armour, or shield of faith, which was merci-

fully vouchsafed to me, for the purpose of enabling me to resist, not only the fiery darts, but the subtle wiles of the enemy; which were now likely to beset me in various ways, little suspected by myself. The most distinguished of these, in its disastrous effects, was that of an intimacy formed with a family, who were eminent for virtue, piety, talent, and learning; whose views of religion were very different from my own; they holding, what are called, high-church principles; and some of them not being able to admit, that salvation was possible to any, who declined the practice of what they considered to be abiding ordinances of the christian church. Of this sentiment I was not aware, for a considerable length of time, after a very strong attachment had been formed between a daughter of this family and myself; nor did she give me full occasion to know, during two years' cultivation of a friendship, which was not only flattering but most congenial to my nature, that it was the object nearest to her heart, pursued with the concurrent interest of others of her family, that I should become thus converted. My sister and myself were also introduced to the intimate acquaintance of another family, who, if less rigid in their sentiments, were not less amiable and engaging in their character and conduct, nor less affectionately interested in the success of the above design.

My intercourse with both was frequent, espe-

cially, for weeks together, at the country house of the latter, in conjunction with my particularly beloved associate. Often was I subjected to a kind of good-natured raillery, respecting the principles and practices of my religious profession, although not strictly conformable to them in my outward appearance and deportment: but being fully persuaded that my friends understood not what they contemned, their attempts of this kind made no impression on me. On my part, nothing like bigotry was exhibited; nor, indeed, that abstaining from touching, tasting, handling, after the commandments and doctrines of men, which would have been obligatory upon one more consistent, than I had evinced myself, with my spiritual profession.

Thus I did not absent myself from their family devotions, which were seriously performed morning and evening; nor object to hear read, any books of a serious nature which were adopted in the family, or proposed by my beloved companion when we were alone; some of which were good in their kind, particularly Locke on the Epistles: yet I could not but discern a want of spirituality in all the productions with which I was there conversant; so true it remains to be, that the great Father of his family sees meet to hide his mysteries from the wise and prudent, and to reveal them unto babes.

After several opportunities of this kind, my sister and myself, with our mother's approbation, made a visit to our numerous relations in Norfolk. We were taken thither by a son of our paternal guardian, who was about to be married to another first-cousin on our mother's side. We enjoyed a long course of innocent recreation, accompanying the new-married couple, with a large number of other young people, in making the tour of Norfolk; and we terminated our visit, by a residence of several weeks both at Norwich and Yarmouth.

My native city became to me, as it had often been, the scene of renewed visitation; especially at the last meeting I attended, through the powerful ministry of my valued relative Edmund Gurney. The influence, which accompanied and succeeded it, constrained me to set my seal of experience to the truth of what I then heard, and received in the love of it. It also greatly tended to confirm a persuasion, that the time was come, or shortly coming, when I must bear a decided testimony to this truth, by an obvious conformity with all its dictates and requisitions.

I was now in the nineteenth year of my age, and had another subject of importance to decide upon; that of admitting or rejecting a proposal of marriage with a member of our Society; whose attachment had more to recommend him than his religious

attainments, or the superiority of his natural endowments. The standard, perhaps improperly fixed in my mind, of the latter, by the specimens with which I had been so conversant among those not of our Society, together with the mediocrity of his religious attainments, determined my refusal of him ; which cost me something, as indeed it ought. On my return to Bath, my female friend, who was the confidante of all such subjects, received from the above circumstance, some encouragement of her hopes to induce a change in my religious views. It was toward the latter end of the same year, and, I may add, at a time when my little share of spiritual strength had been weakened, by the results of some romantic prospects which I had indulged, as before alluded to, that this zealous friend of mine took an opportunity, not as heretofore, in a cautious manner of insinuating the subject, but by the passionate expression of her ardent wish, that I might be enabled to view it in the same light in which it appeared so important to her ; saying with emphasis, it would be the happiest day of her life if she could see me at the font. The ardour and suddenness of the declaration, took me by surprise ; but I need not have fallen a victim to the stratagem, not hers, but that of an unwearied enemy, to seduce my soul from its stedfastness ; for the Captain of salvation was near, able to

defend and to deliver, by instantly furnishing me with a weapon, which, I have no doubt, would have been effectual to repel this his attack.

It arose in my heart to reply with *firmness*, I hope that day will never come. Alas, if we use not strength when mercifully afforded, how impossible is it to recal it in our own time! Concluding that such peremptory language was not perhaps called for by the occasion, and was too harsh for the tenderness of her motives, I unworthily declined to avail myself, of what, I am well satisfied, was given for my preservation. In so doing, I at once lost all my strength, and even the capacity I had trusted in, of making her an answer more suited to my feelings towards her, which might equally serve to repulse her expectations: but my armour was gone; my powers of conception and reflection discomfited. I could find nothing to express, but a kind of evasive reply, which at once left me an easy prey to the sophistry of arguments, used for my convincement; at least, opening the door for them to be poured in upon me, without resistance on my part, or interruption on hers. Her first requisition of me was, that I should read a book, written for the purpose of convincing and converting the Indians to the christian faith. The perusal of it was unattended with interest, pleasure, or profit; the absence of which I had no longer resolution to avow, so that it led the way to a

repetition of similar tasks. As my heart found nothing to repose on, nor my understanding any thing to embrace, the object in her view appeared to remain, for a considerable time, unaccomplished.

However, the independence of character, which I had heretofore maintained, in reference to religious apprehension and practical principle, was gradually undermined, till the very will became enslaved by desire of pleasing one I so much loved. Thus, it would often occur to me, how happy I should be, if I could render her so, by thinking as she did on the above important points: but I was not so lost to integrity, as to do this, or affect to do it, without something that should appear to me sufficient and justifiable ground.

In this state of mind, I one day visited her, after attending the church service, which I had been occasionally, though not frequently, in the practice of doing; when she took down a book, and read to me a considerable portion of it, which was calculated to establish the perpetuity of the outward observances of water baptism and the last supper, under the idea of their being standing ordinances in the christian church: and so cogent did the author's arguments appear, in favour of these views, which I was little qualified and less desirous to controvert; that I embraced them without further hesitation; believing that they would stand the test of all opposition, and were indeed irrefragable.

Had I happily forborne thus to lean to my own understanding, and had waited for the secret counsel of the Lord, who alone is worthy to be trusted, I have no doubt that I might have escaped this snare also ; which was fitted to prevail with the self-confident, and such as could admit any degree of influence to operate, distinguishable from the pure love of truth and resignation to its dictates : but a continued state of suspense, under the want of that patient, humble frame of spirit, in which only safety and preservation can be relied on ; being irksome to nature, the termination of it was gladly accepted as a present relief. From this time forward, I read the scriptures diligently, and received their testimony as through a new medium ; collecting arguments from them on the side of my recently-admitted views ; many of which had escaped my former observation ; which, indeed, had been occupied about the substance and essence of all true religion, rather than those outward ceremonies, which however highly authorized in their day and time, cannot, in their very nature, assume a higher character, than that of sensible signs and symbolic representations of the spiritual grace thereby signified ; and concerning the administration of which signs, there has existed, for many centuries, such a diversity of opinion, such a strife of words.

This could scarcely have been the case, but for

the very general error, in most of the professing christian churches; namely, that of attributing to the shadow, what only does in truth apply to the substance; and thus perverting or confounding the texts, which relate respectively to their different subjects; whereby is ascribed to the former, all the essentiality and efficacy, which, in truth, belong exclusively to the latter.

From this confusion, my mind had been effectually guarded by past experience; so that my new creed extended only to the maintenance of the position, that, whether possessing or not possessing the spiritual grace, it was most concurrent with the precepts and practices recorded in sacred scripture, to continue the outward visible sign: forgetting, at the same time, that the great Head of his own church, if truly recognized as such, does not leave it to the uncertain conclusions of creaturely wisdom, or blind observance of former institutions, but will make Himself known in the character of the Spirit of truth, in which, according to his own declaration, he is with his disciples unto the end of the world; conferring on them a measure of that spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and might, of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, which, without measure, rested upon him, in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

Forgetting these high and holy privileges, and

neglecting to exercise the petition, so worthy to be adopted by those who have tasted that he is gracious, "Oh, send out thy light and thy truth ; let them lead me," &c. I determined to enlist, as under the banner of reason, sanctioned by long-established prescription, and to become a member of the Church of England ; as being the one, to which I was most agreeably affected, as to its general spirit and temper, and because its hierarchy was, at least professedly, built upon apostolic example.

In the above conclusion, I was far from intending to renounce the apprehensions and hopes of those spiritual blessings, of which I had been favoured with such indubitable experience ; not enough considering, that it is those who honour the Lord, by acknowledging him in all their ways, whom he will honour by becoming the Director of their steps : but when he is pleased to withdraw, or withhold the light of his countenance, the joys of his salvation, the sense of his approving presence, there is neither life nor consolation, in any course of conduct we may propose to ourselves as religious service ; but rather an exposure to the awful enquiry, "Who hath required this at your hands?" My conclusion soon became known to my dear mother, who, though not approving, did not deem it best to oppose me in it ; but concurred in my wish, as did the mother of my friend, that we should be permitted to spend the ensuing

summer in a little domestic establishment of our own, separated from the rest of my family; who all, with myself and friend, and some others of their associates, removed to Lyme.

Here I was visited, with earnest expostulatory letters from my honoured uncle, David Barclay; enjoining me to read with attention, the writings of Robert Barclay, Isaac Penington, and William Penn, before I took the serious step of disuniting myself from the religion of my education. To this task, I felt much aversion, and therefore performed it very imperfectly; finding what I dreaded, its tendency to subvert my views, and to disturb the degree of quietness I was otherwise able to maintain under them; so that, rejecting a test, too strong for my weakened and perverted sense of duty, I contented myself with stating my own arguments to my dear uncle; who, perceiving the opposition, both of my understanding and the disposition of my mind, closed the controversy on his part, by the expression of an affectionate desire to commit and commend me to Him, whose "tender mercies are over all his works."

This little effusion of christian love entered into my soul, and awakened a keen sensibility of the excellent spirit, by which he acted towards one differing from himself; which was not equally manifest in some others, who were zealous for doctrines and practices differing from his.

About this time, I also received an impressive and intelligent letter, from my much-esteemed relation, Edmund Gurney; who, hearing of my purpose to join in membership with the established church, made an appeal to the witness in my conscience, whose secret voice was not yet silenced, on behalf of that true religion, with which I had had some experimental acquaintance; according to which, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but a new creature; in other words, "faith which worketh by love." This gave me the desirable opportunity of fully stating, in reply to this excellent letter, my firmly-intended, continued adherence to these fundamental principles; as having no confidence in any thing, that should estrange me from spiritual, experimental religion; though apprehending, that the continuance of the outward adjuncts, practised in the primitive church, were obligatory.

On the above occasion, I was surprised to find my beloved companion unable to understand my language, or comprehend my meaning; which was, however, readily conceived, with some satisfaction, by my relation; although, at the earnest instance of my friend, I had a little varied my original expressions: but, feeling their entire coincidence with the testimony of my conscience, I persisted in introducing them, towards the conclusion of my letter, in a manner no less unequivocal in favour

of spiritual, substantial, experimental religion ; which first instance of deviation from her entire approbation, afforded me a degree of true peace. Oh ! how important is the injunction, to call no man father, master, or lord, in spiritual matters, and to know Him alone as such, who thus commanded his disciples.

Before the end of that summer, my project of a change of religious profession was consummated, by my becoming subject to the ceremony of water baptism, or sprinkling ; my dear father, who had been neuter in this whole business, consenting, at my request, to stand as godfather, with a gentleman of his acquaintance ; and my friend, with another very estimable person of our acquaintance, as my female sponsors. This ceremony appeared to me, together with the appendages, very insignificant ; as, surely, it would be likely to do, to any in the present day, who had really experienced a measure of that baptism of spiritual water and spiritual fire, which alone can cleanse and sanctify the soul ; or who had been introduced, not only into a nominal acknowledgment of the names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but into some subjection to the divine authority of these Holy Three of whom record is borne. That no correspondent experience of this kind, should attend me in this act of conformity to supposed obligation, discouraged, though it did not much surprise me ;

and under similar impressions, I obtained confirmation. I was now returned with my family, to Bath; and I still cherished the hope, that my attendance on what I considered the sacramental supper, would be distinguished by the more sensible participation of spiritual blessedness: but there also was I disappointed; though I thought the appearances of true tenderness and some degree of devotion, were more conspicuous in others on that occasion, than in the performance of any other part of their worship.

Having now regularly attended the church service for more than five months, I continued so to do with unremitting assiduity, three times at least in a week, and twice a day private devotion, with earnest desires of finding it profitable to my soul: but in vain I thus sought to supply and replenish the aching void I felt, of spiritual refreshment and consolation. My real seriousness attracted the attention and esteem of many, both members and ministers of that congregation; in which, the deportment of very many others, totally destitute as they appeared of the life of religion, or any real interest in its concerns, painfully affected me. The high price paid by myself and others, for the accommodation of good seats, and the circumstance of there being none of any kind provided for the poor, a few of whom stood in the aisles, gave me uneasiness, as being very contrary to the order and

freedom of the gospel. The ministry also was little suited to the exigencies of my state; yet I had a great affection for the pastor of that congregation, whom I had been well acquainted with many years, and had discerned in him, not only much amiable natural sensibility, but religious sensibility also. Such was his estimation of me, that on my expressing dissatisfaction with many of the communications from the pulpit, which was occupied by several different clergymen, as being void of the spirit and influence of the gospel; he freely offered to preach or read any sermon, that I would write consistently with my views and wishes on the subject. Though I was almost tempted to embrace such an opportunity, of confiding to him and his discretion for further use, such a testimony to the spirituality of the gospel dispensation as my heart would have dictated, I considered myself, as indeed I was, unfit and unworthy to undertake such a task. I was often engaged in composing forms of prayer, more suited to my inward condition, and more consonant, as I apprehended, with the exigencies of others, than I met with in the prayer book; among which, the Homilies were chiefly preferred. It was, indeed, with much sincerity, that I acknowledged myself in the language of the liturgy, a miserable sinner; yet, like many others, I was not then prepared to enter by the door of true repentance, had it been clearly opened

to me ; I mean, that repentance from all dead works, by which I might have attained a capacity to serve the living God in newness of life. I also read religious books, and sermons without number ; which were acceptable to me, in proportion as they tended to exalt the standard of spiritual religion.

In the spring of the following year, which was the twenty-first of my age, I had an inclination to pay a visit of affection to my worthy uncle, David Barclay ; who since I had seen him, had lost his only surviving and most amiable daughter, the wife of my cousin Richard Gurney. Such was my early attachment to that admirable young person, with whom my intimacy had been sweetly renewed in the nineteenth year of my age, that I sometimes concluded, had her life been spared, I could not have resolved to leave the Society of which she was a conscientious and consistent member ; but her death seemed to release me from one of the most powerful obstacles to that step.

My dear mother feared my exposure to the unsettlement of my principles, from this journey ; but the clergyman before mentioned, gave her his opinion, that there could be no danger to one so evidently established. I concluded not to incur any, that might arise from entering into religious controversy with any of my friends, or attending any of their meetings : my dear uncle so far united

in this design, without knowing it to be my own, that he forbore, and recommended it to my other relations generally, to forbear, to engage me on such subjects.

I was received by my uncle, aunt, and my other relations, with true christian courtesy; and they kindly facilitated my wishes to attend the worship of the established church, and take the sacrament, so called, as opportunity offered.

I was painfully struck with the want of any sign of true devotion, or spiritual mindedness, in the several congregations I attended in London; both in preachers and hearers. Had I gone, as I once felt some inclination to do, to that called St. Mary Woolnoth, I might have found an exception to this description; but being accidentally prevented, I have sometimes thought it was in the ordering of Providence, that whatever of spiritual religion was then circulating in the national church, I was not permitted to find it, though I sought it with the most earnest desire of success; and that, lest I should finally rest satisfied with a condition, much short of that of which I had had so distinguished a foretaste, as prepared for that people, in whom the Lord, by his own Spirit, most immediately rules and reigns.

CHAP. II.

UNDER the reiterated disappointment of my ardent desires, as mentioned in the last chapter, which left me often disconsolate, I had recourse to all the arguments, which had appeared so sufficient to convince my understanding of the rectitude of the step I had taken. But though these were revolved in the secret of my mind, from morning to night and from night to morning, and still appeared impregnable, their insufficiency to administer comfort left me a prey to increasing uneasiness, which I succeeded in concealing from the observation of others. But soon after returning home, I was effectually roused from that which I would have made, if possible, my soul's rest; polluted and interrupted as it was.

Being employed in the morning, dressing myself, my thoughts, as usual, deeply occupied in reconsidering the arguments, which had been so prevalent in determining my change of religious profession, my mind was, in the most sudden and powerful manner, arrested in its course, by the irresistible impression of these words, formed within me but not uttered by me, "I must be a Quaker;" accompanied by a sense of divine authority, which

I could not evade, but to the requisition of which, I was equally remote from a willingness to yield. I became accordingly introduced into an agony of mental conflict, from which I was no less unable to relieve myself, than averse to accept relief by a compliance with such terms.

My dear sister and our female companion soon apprized my mother, that something very extraordinary attended me; who, coming into my chamber, approached me, not without evident fear and astonishment, with the kindly-intended observation, that I was ill: when, on my feeling my pulse, which remained perfectly calm during this mental tumult, I requested her to do the same, saying with earnestness, "No, I am not ill, but the judgments of the Almighty are upon me." She soon left me, I doubt not, with deep concern for what she could not fully comprehend, nor was able to gainsay; and I do not remember seeing either herself or my sister again, before three. Our companion, however, remained with me, though unable to assuage my distress, or to administer suitable counsel. I threw myself on the bed, but soon left it again; and I believed that the anguish I then witnessed, far exceeded the bodily pains of martyrdom, by fire or other torture.

My friend appeared kindly to sympathize in the suffering I endured, which I could not conceal, but attempted not to explain; for I might indeed say,

with David, "The arrows of the Almighty stick fast in me, and his hand presseth me sore."

I had not breakfasted ; and I do not recollect that I ate or drank any thing, till three o'clock ; when dinner being ready, I entreated my companion to go, and leave me alone ; adding, that I believed it would be the best situation for me.

When thus left, I prostrated myself, soul and body, before the Lord, and surrendered up that stubborn will, which had, during all these hours, remained in opposition to the will of my Maker ; saying, in the secret of my soul, "I resign myself into thy hand ; *I will be a Quaker*, if this be thy divine requisition of me." Immediately, my soul was filled with such a measure of heavenly peace, as I had never before experienced : all within me was increasingly subjected, under the sense of the divine power and presence : heaven itself seemed to be opened on me ; in which state, I could only say, Amen ! to his law. I conjecture, it might be about half an hour I remained on my knees. But the work, the trial of my faith and fidelity, was not yet finished : for as I was thinking to join the family, a question arose, not in the least of my own seeking or expecting, namely, perhaps the sacrifice of the will, thus made and so signally owned, would now be accepted for the deed ; and that, as heretofore, nothing more was now required of me.

Had I exercised only a little patience, and waited a little longer, to weigh this suggestion in the balance of the sanctuary, resigning it to the determination of Him, who had thus marvellously evinced himself my all-sufficient Director, I am fully persuaded I should have discovered its author to be the enemy of my soul's peace; who seemed to be allowed again to prove me with his subtle baits, and once more, alas, I fell a victim to them. For though the thought was also suggested from a better source, whether I should not further try this proposed escape from such a decided exposure, as another change in my religion, before it was embraced; the desire I had admitted, to shew myself, thus restored to peace and quietness, to my anxious friends below, prevailed against this salutary intimation. I found the family just at the conclusion of their meal; surprised and comforted to see me apparently well and comfortable.

To those who may yet be strangers to such replenishment of soul from the source of divine love, it may seem strange, that the savour thereof did not instantly forsake me, on my listening to the voice of another counsellor: but it was not so much rebellion of the will, which I had no thought of withdrawing from its allegiance unto God, as the unwatchful reception of the spirit of deceit. And my gracious Father, who alone knew the conflicts through which I had passed, and the extent

of the sacrifice, which, through his long-suffering mercy, I had been enabled to offer ; more costly to my nature than the immediate surrender of my life ; saw meet to continue something of the sweetness and tranquillity which had been so dearly purchased, though nothing less than actual obedience would be accepted as the term of its long duration.

My mother proposed an airing in the afternoon, and a visit to the family of the clergyman before mentioned, in company with herself and others ; to which I readily consented. When at his house, I heard my mother say to him, that I had been dreadfully affected that morning ; but he, observing my serenity, took little notice of the information.

The next day being what is called Good Friday, and nothing further being impressed on my mind, which, indeed, was thus almost imperceptibly withdrawn from its purpose of acknowledging myself a Quaker, I concluded to go to chapel as heretofore, and to take the sacrament. In the midst of this solemn ceremony, which now more than ever appeared such to me, an awakening view of my real condition was opened in the inmost of my soul ; in which I could see myself on the brink of a deep abyss, which was ready to swallow me up ; but averting my mental eye from such an appalling vision, though afforded me, as I fearfully apprehended, by the light of truth, I unhappily rejected it, and closed in with the temptations of the grand

enemy, who is able to transform himself into an angel of light.

Under this appearance, he now renewedly took possession of my soul; giving me such a sensible joy and elevation of spirit, as I had never before been acquainted with, in the process of the exercise I had been engaged in; so that now, in a kind of ecstasy, I considered myself sealed and confirmed as a member of the Church of England.

I spent the residue of the day mostly under this secret ecstasy; but the next day, the powers of nature being much exhausted, and having lost that sustaining and substantial peace, which the enemy cannot counterfeit, I became so ill as to keep my bed. A remarkable circumstance of another kind distinguished this day: it was the unexpected arrival of the individual, whose matrimonial proposal I had rejected; who now came with some better hope of success, having, in conformity with my example, left the religious profession of his ancestors, and joined the same Church. I refused however to see him, thinking it safest to confirm my refusal in writing. He inquired of my dear sister, what sort of person she would think I might ever be disposed to accept. She answered, Some religious clergyman. He replied, Alas! where will she find such an one? This circumstance, with the thought of his having changed

his religious profession, in conformity with my example, occasioned me some uneasy sensations.

A few days after this, the great deceiver was permitted once more so to transform himself, as to fill me, not indeed with that tranquil joy and peace in believing, which is a fruit of the Spirit, but with a kind of animal joy and delight, which I embraced without further hesitation; concluding it to be all the evidence, that had before been wanting, in favour of the rectitude of my renewed decision. But that edifice, however fair, which has no foundation, cannot long stand; that plant, however flourishing, which has no root, must soon wither and decay: thus did my unsubstantial joys and comforts shortly leave me, in a state of desolation, known I believe to none, except such as have kindled a fire, compassed themselves about with sparks, to whom it was said, "Walk in the light of your fire, &c. but this shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow."

Increasingly deep was the sense of this sorrow, under which no consolation remained: on the contrary, a much greater subversion of true peace, of grateful hope of better days, than I had ever before been reduced to; accompanied with a full and clear conviction, that I had been acting out of the Lord's counsel, and in entire opposition to the certain manifestations of his will. All confidence in his favour, and acceptance on any terms, had

now forsaken me ; the way to act was no longer cast up in my view ; the sense of divine aid, so memorably extended when yielding myself to the immediate revelation of his will, was altogether withdrawn ; and the will itself, if it did not oppose, seemed to be in a state of captivity, incapable of uniting itself to the divine. How true is the scripture acknowledgment, "thy people shall be a willing people in the day of thy power." When the season of the manifestation of that power is passed over, the creature has no power of its own, to will or to do of the Lord's good pleasure.

Such was my state ; under which, my only relief was that of the confession of it, where that confession would have been heretofore the most reluctantly made, and would still be the most unwillingly received ; even to my friend, who came to visit me in this season of distress. To her, I no longer made any hesitation of exposing it, and declaring the cause, which she was by no means disposed to admit, but endeavoured to resolve the whole into a fit of enthusiasm ; acting towards me, as I thought, rather the part of Job's friends, than of one capable of sympathizing in my deep and not imaginary sufferings. Several others paid me visits of a similar kind, and among them a certain clergyman, to whom I endeavoured to represent my condition and the causes of it. But, for such a subject, he had no ear, no heart ; and

offered to read something of an entertaining nature, to divert my mind from such thoughts. I acknowledged, but declined his civility; and afterwards betook myself to reading the scriptures, in which I found passages which seemed to speak to my state. One of those, to which I could now experimentally subscribe, was that passage in the Hebrews, "the word of the Lord is quick and powerful;" which I clearly understood to refer, not to the *word* of scripture, as some apprehend, but to the eternal essential Word; "which was in the beginning, which was and is God."

Some small degree of relief accompanied my renewed reception of these soul-searching truths; from which, all desire to shelter myself seemed now effectually extinguished, and the wise resolution of the prophet sincerely adopted, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." My health became increasingly affected: it was kindly, rather than judiciously, proposed by my affectionate parents, who were about leaving home with my dear sister, that I should spend the time of their absence with an amiable family of our acquaintance; where I was invited, together with the friend, whose influence had been so powerfully exerted in bringing me into a condition, from which, however, it was ineffectual to relieve me.

We went accordingly to a beautiful country-

seat, about twenty-seven miles from Bath, where my tossed mind was subjected to many alternations; sometimes seeking to shelter itself under the apprehensions of my surrounding friends, that all these conflicts were an effect of disease; at others, yielding to the influence of the most painful suggestions; the effects of which had indeed so extended themselves from my mental to my bodily frame, as to produce severe nervous paroxysms: during these, I always reverted to the full acknowledgment of my unfaithfulness, as the cause; but when a little relieved from their irresistible tendencies, the natural part, being weary of suffering, was again too easily induced to ascribe the agitated state of my mind to bodily disease. On returning, in the course of a month, to my parental habitation, my nervous system became still more severely affected by the strong excitement of my mind; producing fits of a convulsive kind, of several hours' duration; which appearing to threaten my life, a physician was called in, who gave it as his opinion, that I could not live through another paroxysm. He administered opium, in large quantities: this produced the desired effect on my bodily organs, but was succeeded by such extreme weakness, that I could scarcely lift my hand to my head, nor stand or walk, more than a new-born infant; so that my life seemed to myself to be at a very low ebb.

Such a degree of quietude or inertion of mind was now permitted me, as I was inclined to ascribe to the compassionate regard of my heavenly Father, who in the midst of judgment still remembered mercy; inducing a hope, that he would then take me to himself, blot out all my transgressions as a thick cloud, and receive me freely. Oh! how I longed to depart; not so much to be with Christ, as to escape any repetition of conflict: but He, who knew that I had not on the wedding garment, nor yet had my robes effectually washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, saw meet to continue me in mutability, and even to suffer me to be exposed to a long fight of affliction; that I might finally be made capable of knowing, and acknowledging, and praising him, who only giveth the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

On the return of my dear parents and sister, who were tenderly affected at seeing me so greatly reduced, I was taken by them into Devonshire, for the benefit of sea-air and bathing; though in such a state of debility, as to be taken like an infant, in and out of the carriage. A kind friend, who had formerly been my governess, was appointed to be my constant companion and nurse. An apartment was provided for us, detached from the rest of the large party; from whom I might accordingly retire, whenever my state of body or mind required it. The former soon received considerable restoration

from the means proposed ; yet not so completely, but that I continued for many succeeding years, subject to nervous faintings, and sudden loss of all strength in one or other side of the body, for some hours together.

My mind did not, in this situation, acquire any increase of spiritual strength : for, not making use of the little afforded me, to seek for the renewal of it from the fountain-head, nor exercising the measure of faith received, in the sufficiency of my almighty and only effectual Helper, I made no advances in the way of peace and holiness ; and, strange to tell, as soon as my bodily health admitted, betook myself again to the Church of England worship ; not seeming to have light nor life, either to guide me out of it, or to sustain me in it. In this state, I returned with my family to Bath, where all remaining conflicts seemed at length to subside ; and in lieu of that precious peace, which, had those conflicts been faithfully maintained against the spirit of deceit, would have been their happy result, I had recourse to the miserable substitute of dissipation, in a degree to which I had been ever before a stranger. I frequented the theatre, as often as opportunity was afforded, by the invitation of such of my acquaintance as were thought to be suitable company ; also balls and concerts ; from none of which I received the smallest grain of pleasure, though they served

to divert my attention from subjects of a more painful nature.

I regularly attended the church service; received what is called the sacrament; and was thought by many to be truly devout. Indeed, during these solemn exercises, and at seasons of private devotion, which were regularly observed, I was often sincerely desirous of obtaining peace and acceptance with my Maker. But it was in vain to seek it, or to say, "thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," while in a state, in which I had rejected the counsel of God against myself; was choosing my own will rather than the divine will; refusing his immediate government by the Spirit of his Son; and was therefore incapable of being a subject of that kingdom, which consists in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Thus I continued till the following spring, under an increasing hardness of heart; which was such, that I hated the name and sight of a Quaker; and I found in myself the rising of many evil dispositions, especially vanity and pride, in a degree in which I had never before felt their force. At seasons, the thought of my lifeless condition towards God and true godliness, would present itself; especially at bed time, when the query would arise, whether if my life should be required of me that night, I had any ground for hope of acceptance

with him ; and the answer of my own heart was ever in the awful negative.

This, at length, aroused me from my lethargy ; and I began to consider, that the recurrence of my former conflicts and sufferings was much to be desired, in preference to my present state. I then concluded, that the most likely means within my power, by which my hardened heart might become again penetrated, and, if possible, rendered susceptible of divine impressions, would be to encounter a kind of *fiery ordeal*, by casting myself among my numerous friends and relations of the Society of Friends, both in London and Norwich ; without giving to any of them, the least intimation of my views in so doing, or even discovering my dissatisfaction in the path I had chosen.

This step was accordingly pursued, with the consent of my family ; though not without a fear on the part of my dear mother, which she expressed to the clergyman whose ministry I attended, lest I should thereby be exposed to fresh doubts and distresses. He replied, that such was become the stability of my character and conduct, and so deeply grounded my piety, that he could trust me any where without the fear of such a consequence.

I had, indeed, been actuated by an increase of religious zeal, before I left home ; earnestly seeking for spiritual nourishment and consolation, from hearing and reading sermons and other books of

divinity: and being deeply persuaded, that without the agency of the Holy Spirit, both in the preacher and hearer, no fruits of holiness would be produced, I sometimes expressed such a belief; which seemed a little to ease my burden. Had I, in this state, met with some such spiritually-minded pastors, as I have since known something of, I might possibly have rested in, or at least remained in communion with, the Church of England: in which, nevertheless, I had clearly discovered many spots and blemishes, many corrupt deviations from gospel purity. But no such opportunity was afforded; nor, I believe, would lasting peace have been given me, but on the terms of obedience to duty immediately manifested to my soul.

Being received by my dear relations with their wonted christian courtesy, I continued to attend the Church of England worship, with an increase of earnest desire, that the Lord would again send forth his light and his truth, and thereby lead and guide me out of all darkness, into the light and liberty of his true children; whether in, or from under, my then religious profession, from which I became secretly more and more detached. When proceeding to Norwich, in the same disposition of mind and course of outward conduct, this daily sacrifice of my will to my heavenly Father, became so wholly the exercise of my spirit, both in and

out of church, that I ceased to utter the expression of any other prayer ; conforming, only by the attitude of body, to the church service ; lest I should make discovery of the work that was going forward in my mind, before it was so far perfected, as to warrant the hope of my withstanding whatever opposition I might have to encounter, if again instructed, and enabled to embrace the principles and profession of a Friend. For, these I dared not assume in my own will, time, or strength ; being given to believe, that he who knew the secrets of my heart, and its renewed devotedness to follow whithersoever he might be pleased to lead, would yet guide me by his counsel, if he designed ultimately to receive me into glory ; which I ever believed to be his gracious purpose toward all who had not sinned out the term he might be pleased to assign them, as the day of salvation to their souls.

My exercised state became, however, discoverable to such among my friends, as were endowed with spiritual discernment, as I afterwards understood ; and was indicated by the tenderness and charity of their deportment toward me ; never entering into argument with me, or making any unpleasant remarks on my separation from religious communion with them, and perseverance in attending the national worship.

On returning to London, I met a clergyman from America, who rather helped me on my way ;

telling me, in reply to the hints I gave him of my unsettled condition, that he had read with much satisfaction Barclay's Apology, and recommended to me also to read Law's works: the latter, I felt at that time no inclination to become acquainted with, except his work on christian perfection, which I had long much esteemed. At length I formed a resolution to read some of the writings of Friends; and meeting with the works of William Penn, I commenced my study. But how to describe, or to account for the effect thereby produced on my mind, in an intelligible manner, I shall probably be at a loss.

An involuntary terror seized my whole internal frame, which I could by no means assuage by closing the book; and which I was utterly at a loss whether to attribute to the opposition of my nature to such a standard of purity as was therein exhibited and enforced, or to the machinations of the grand enemy, in order to the frustration of any good effect from the upright purpose I had been enabled to form. About this time also, having read with satisfaction and approbation, the lectures of Archbishop Leighton, I concluded to purchase his work on the epistles of Peter. In the reading of this, I was also most painfully affected, though not in a similar manner to that above described. But the doctrine of eternal, unconditional election and reprobation took such distressing hold on my

mind, and so tended to fix me in a state of unutterable discouragement, that, shutting the book, I concluded to return it to the bookseller, who was a serious young man; telling him my reasons for so doing; which appeared to be a seasonable confirmation to himself, of the unfavourable tendency of such doctrine.

I soon resumed my experiment of William Penn's "No Cross, no Crown;" and with a repetition of the same painful effects; so that I was on the point of determining to look no more into such writings: but at length, resolving patiently to endure the paroxysms of distress, which would thus threaten to overwhelm me, and looking to the great Preserver for support, they became less violent; and this language was verified in my experience, "resist the devil," not only as a tempter but as a tormentor, "and he will flee from you."

The period proved to be now come, for my attending the Church of England worship for the last time; though I had formed no such conclusion.

When I went to the chapel, which was at Clapton, the impression which my mind there received, of the absence of spirituality in that congregation, and the prevalence of light-mindedness in the generality of its members, (though the clergyman preached sound doctrine, and what happened to be well adapted to my state; enforcing the duty of obedience to the cross of Christ, whatever suffering

it might involve) that in my long solitary walk to the house at which I was a visitor, during a severe storm of thunder and lightning, I determined never more to enter any place of worship under the establishment.

Not seeing whither else to betake myself, I remained sequestered from all public religious communion; earnestly desiring that the internal work of purification might take place, before I should essay to join any other profession; especially that of the Quakers, which appeared to me to be exalted above my state or capacity to assume, with any degree of true consistency. In this separation, spending a little time at the house of my parental uncle, David Barclay, in London, though in the absence of the family, I was visited by a pious Methodist of my acquaintance, who earnestly wished me to go and hear an eminent preacher of that persuasion; nor did I want inclination to do so. But considering, that I was now broken off from all former and creaturely dependences, and had, in an especial manner, committed myself to divine guidance, which I trusted would be manifested to me in due time, I declined the proposal; which I have since been satisfied was a safe step.

Here also, a near relation, of the Society of Friends, called upon me; and understanding I had left the Church, she took up Barclay's Apology, which I had left untouched lying on the window,

and read aloud the head or subject matter of each of the fifteen propositions. From any such attempt I had been deterred, from the fear of shackling my mind with arguments, which it might not be in a proper condition to receive or disprove. But finding, to my great surprise, that all the opposition which I had heretofore imbibed, to the doctrine and principles of Friends, particularly on the subjects of baptism and the Lord's supper, was completely done away, and that every line I heard appeared to be in unison with my feelings and apprehension of the pure truth, I concluded to spend the remaining short time of my stay in London, in reading the work itself; which I eagerly pursued, not only by day but during a considerable part of the night, till I had completed thirteen propositions; leaving the two last, as not so peculiarly interesting to me, who, I thought, had a deeper and more radical work to experience, before the regulation of the superficialities of my conduct in dress and deportment could be rightly attempted.

Yet here an observation impresses my mind, that I believe is applicable to all requisitions of duty, as well of a minor as of a more extensive character; namely, that it is in the day of the Lord's power, the season in which he may condescend to make manifest his will, with ability to do it, that even his people can become a willing people; because he assuredly works in them (though

not irresistibly) to will and to do of his own good pleasure, by disposing their hearts, as well as by instructing their understandings, in the ways of his choosing; which, when attempted without a fresh sense of his aid, are found in many instances, to be either laborious or impracticable. This truth was remarkably verified in my experience, shortly after the above period, on my rejoining my family and friends at Teignmouth; to whom I resolved to return under the profession of a Quaker.

My appearance and deportment not announcing any change, I found it extremely difficult to introduce a subject of such deep interest, to the assembled circle by whom I was now surrounded; and which consisting, not only of my relations, but also, very unexpectedly, of the clergyman, and his wife, who had been so kindly disposed to guarantee my stability when leaving Bath; and of the beloved, though mistaken, instrument of my conversion; not indeed from darkness to light, but from a measure of true light unfaithfully maintained, to a mournful degree of darkness and confusion; I foresaw the opposition I had to expect from these various quarters, and remained for many days in a kind of awful suspense, as to what course I ought to pursue amidst such discouraging influences. Ah! thought I, had that obedience been yielded, when so unequivocally called for, which is better than sacrifice; that hearkening to the

voice of the Lord, when it was so distinctly sounded, which is better than the fat of rams ; *now* had my peace been as a river, and my righteousness (effected by Him, who works all our works in us to his own praise) as the waves of the sea. At length an opening was afforded by my kind father, to whom having expressed my approbation and recommendation of a little tract, then recently published by J. Helton, containing his reasons for joining the Society of Friends, he replied, greatly to my surprise, "I believe those are the principles which you sincerely approve, and that you will not be happy without openly professing them; only I wish you to be very tender, in making such a conclusion known to your dear mother." I fully acknowledged the truth of his observations, and my earnest desire to act conformably with his affectionate injunction.

Watching an opportunity of making a like confession to my mother, I accepted her invitation to take an airing with her, during which, her interesting conversation on different subjects scarcely left me the possibility of introducing what was still nearer my heart. At length, I abruptly broke in on her observations, by telling her that I had something of importance to communicate, which I hoped would not cost her any renewed uneasiness on my account. It was the conviction, in which my mind was now fixed, that I must profess

myself, what I truly was in principle, a Quaker. I perceived the deep and alarming impression she thence imbibed; namely, that my understanding was endangered, by the admission of the idea of another such conspicuous change. After kindly endeavouring to prevent any agitation on my part, by concealing her own, she desired me to make myself easy, for that nothing, which was found to be for my real peace and comfort, would be opposed by my own family. Before our return home, she stopped at the lodging of my then invalid friend, who had been my former mistaken counsellor; and leaving me in the carriage, she imparted to her the unwelcome intelligence. Her manner of receiving it, and animadversions thereon, served to confirm my beloved mother in the fear, that insanity must inevitably prove to be the cause or consequence of such repeated change of profession: the former being most readily espoused, as furnishing relief to the mind of my afflicted friend, from the more deprecated evil of my wilful apostasy.

My friend resolutely persisted in this apprehension and explanation of my conduct. Her sufferings on the occasion were nevertheless real, and her state of health being at the time precarious, my father, who attended her as a medical friend, thought it proper to intimate to me, that her life was likely to be endangered by my perseverance. A grain of living faith was, however, at this

momentous juncture, mercifully afforded; by which I was enabled confidently to express my belief, that she would not die; though the tenderest sympathies of my nature were powerfully called forth, both on her behalf, and that of my much-valued clerical friend and former pastor, who could do little but weep over, what he deemed, my innocent but pitiable enthusiasm.

My own family, painfully impressed with the views and feelings of others as well as their own, at length concurred in this conclusion; and without my understanding the motives of their conduct, they easily persuaded me to consent to a state of much seclusion from the rest of the family, which was enlarged by numerous guests. Retirement was, indeed, the condition most congenial to my inclination; except that I obtained two very distressing interviews with my friend, who urged me by every influence she could exert, to forego what she deemed, and declared she ever should esteem, the suggestions of insanity.

I was however enabled to believe, that the succours of divine grace would be sufficient for the weakest mortal, if they should be bountifully vouchsafed: that they were not so manifested, for my sensible support, was the most distressing cause of my depression; but I, who had so often rejected and opposed their blessed influence, was now most justly, and I doubt not most wisely, left to feel

what *nature* is, with all its boasted energies, without a measure of that power from on high, which is equally necessary to enable us to do or to suffer according to the divine will. The latter duty, that of suffering with faith and patience, appeared to be all that was at this time required of me; and I was often led in the secret of my soul to acknowledge, that it was of the Lord's mercy I was not consumed, because his compassions fail not, but are renewed every morning.

After a month of these complicated trials, my dear connexions became convinced that I was preserved in a state of entire *sanity*; however uncalled for, in their view, was the sacrifice I had resolved on, of making myself a spectacle indeed in the eye of the world. To avoid the unnecessary or premature exposure of me as such, my parents concluded to spend, not only the residue of the summer but the ensuing winter, at Teignmouth; informing me also, that they should not oppose my views and sentiments any further; only enjoining it upon me, to make no conspicuous alteration in my outward appearance and demeanour, whilst I could have peace of mind in forbearing, what they deemed, an offensive and useless instance of austere singularity: with this I signified my conditional compliance.

At this period, I was wholly from under the example and observation of such members of our

Society, as were consistent in these respects ; and not likely soon to have an opportunity of contrasting myself with them, in order either to the confirmation or condemnation of my practices ; being, to my great regret, sixteen miles from any meeting : so that I continued to maintain my usual exterior, in dress and language : spending much of my time with my dear sister, in visiting the poor and sick, according to the practice in which we were initiated by our benevolent mother ; in reading the scriptures with them, and also in much private retirement and reading by myself.

I was made deeply sensible, that though, in regard to many important articles of general belief and practice, it may be truly said, he that runs may read ; so clearly are the testimonies of sacred scripture applied and adapted to every state and condition of the heart, that is effectually turned to the source of all spiritual intelligence, and brought into subjection and childlike dependence thereon ; yet, that it is He only, who is declared to have the key of David, the spirit of true interpretation and application, that could so open spiritual truths to my understanding, and impress them on my heart, as to render them in any degree experimental and effectual to me : for, that reception of them, which is merely speculative or controversial, I could no longer endure ; as being void of any nourishment or consolation to my soul. The state of my mind,

if not wholly that of a complete chaos (requiring to be created anew in Christ Jesus), much resembled that of a ruined building, in which scarcely one stone had been left upon another. In this state of devastation, I have since seen the safety of being willing to abide in deep humility, until it might please the great Master-builder to begin and carry on his own gradual work ; or, according to another scriptural metaphor, until the great and good Husbandman should see meet both to cause the fallow ground to be broken up, and the seed of the kingdom renewedly sown, cherished, and cultivated : but to endure such a state, is a sore trial to the activities and anxieties of nature.

Among the many temptations which assailed me at this time, either to allure or scare me from my purpose of waiting upon the Lord, till he should manifest his soul-restoring power in me, was the introduction of books, into our family circle, of a kind which were peculiarly suited to my natural taste and former habits. Though not mentioned in its place, the study of metaphysics had been sedulously pursued by me, at different periods of my life ; especially, a little before that, when my attention was so unexpectedly turned into the channel of doctrinal discussion, rather than that of philosophical research. I have long esteemed the former, not to be, more than the latter, the divinely-appointed guide to spiritual

truth; and while retaining a paramount love to this truth, both as manifesting itself in my mind, and impressively set forth in the sacred scriptures, I was preserved from embracing, or even delighting in any metaphysical works, which tended to undermine their united testimony; such as those of Hume, Helvetius, and others; being persuaded that the wretched results of such kind of reasoning were sufficient proof of its invalidity, and of the blindness of that guide, which they had thus chosen for themselves as infallible.

I even discarded the works of Locke; thinking, though perhaps mistakenly, that his denial of all innate ideas militated against internal impressions on the spirit of man; the blessed reality of which, I had been favoured too sensibly to experience, to dare to call in question: but hoped to find among pious metaphysicians, an argumentative proof of that most salutary truth; which, however believed by some of them, and even testified to in degree by Locke, is rarely, if ever, so clearly exhibited by them as it ought to be, if the state of the mind of man is intended to be fairly delineated.

To return to the account of my condition at Teignmouth, as before described.

This certainly did not proceed from the exercise of my speculative powers, but rather from the subjection of the creaturely part, before Him, who, I believed, could alone enlighten my darkness, and

speaking peace to my troubled spirit. A new and more inviting bait was, however, presented to my choice, by the writings of Priestley, and Hartley on Man; the tendency of which would have been, that of inducing me to be satisfied, possibly, with a kind of half-way house in the path of religion; receiving so much and no more of the scriptures, than could be reduced to the standard of the natural understanding; and adopting no more of practical piety, than might be obtained through the influence of precept and example, unaided by that of the Holy Spirit. Not fully aware of their tendency, I longed to join individuals in the family, in reading these so highly commended as religious and philosophical works; but such a salutary fear was granted to possess my mind, that when the books were brought out, I constantly left the room, standing awhile with my hand on the door, to feel whether I might not find freedom to return; but this was never allowed me; which I received as a mark of providential care towards me, and the more so, when I became involuntarily acquainted, by the conversation of others, with the tenor of these and other such writings.

Temptations of a deeper nature were also permitted to attend my obscure path; some of the most formidable, with which the spiritually-visited mind can be beset; even those of satan's transformations into an angel of light. In my devotional

exercises, which yet amounted to nothing more than disconsolate endeavours to wait upon the Lord with acceptance (a state of true inward silence not having been fully attained), the enemy would suddenly kindle a false fire in my mind, by which I should be able to utter copious energetic expressions in the form of prayer: but, desiring above all things to be rightly instructed and engaged in that exercise, I was enabled to detect this counterfeit, as his bait: it being wholly unattended with the characteristic evidence of that work of righteousness, which is declared to be peace, and its effect to be quietness and assurance for ever. Thus was I strengthened to prefer a state of mourning and of conflict, till the true light and life should appear for my deliverance, to any of those subtle appearances of the great deceiver, which for a time were permitted to assail me.

After six months spent in this seclusion from such opportunities of public worship as I dared embrace, the occurrence of the winter Quarterly Meeting for Friends at Exeter induced me to request my mother's permission, that I might go thither on that occasion; to which she consented, but not without sensible emotion, and proposed my dear sister's accompanying me to a Friend's house in that place. I had not previously made any conspicuous change in my dress or deportment, remembering my engagement not to do so

without an apprehended obligation of duty. My uncertainty on this subject often tried me, lest it might be the effect of want of resignation; but when at Exeter, being forcibly struck with the incongruity of my whole appearance with my real state of mind, which was truly that of a self-condemned and penitent delinquent, I could not resolve to enter a meeting of Friends, without divesting myself of my most obvious superfluities.

Thus new modelled as to the outward, I attended the first sitting of the Quarterly Meeting, after full three years' absence from any assembly of that people. But oh! my inward state, though discerned and humbly acknowledged by me, as altogether unfit for the communion of saints, or that blessed fellowship which is with the Father and the Son, and one with another in him; still required to be more effectually washed with that pure spiritual water unto repentance, and thoroughly purified by that more fervent operation of the Holy Spirit which is comparable to fire, of both which the blessed Jesus is the author and administrator; before I could be fitted for a participation in these high privileges.

Great was the confusion of my imagination, whilst sitting in outward silence with a large number of serious, and some of them, deeply-experienced Friends, to whom I thought my secret condition would be discernible: and not coming

to the experience of that power, which alone could utter the effective language in my soul, as formerly to the elementary winds and waves, "Peace, be still," I left the meeting before it was quite concluded; considering, also, that I had no right to stay the ensuing one for business; although my membership in the Society had never been either regularly relinquished by myself, or my separation recognized by the Monthly Meeting, within the compass of which, my change of profession had taken place.

Returning to the kind Friend's house, at which I was a visitor, in a disconsolate condition, I was unexpectedly pleased to find that, at the conclusion of the second meeting, we were to be favoured with the company of two valuable ministers, namely, Ann Byrd and Mary Were, who till that juncture were entire strangers to me. Their very appearance and deportment seemed to impress me with a degree of awe, which was heightened into an indescribable sense of that sublime feeling, when M. W., kneeling down at table after dinner, appeared in solemn supplication, beginning with these words, "Holiness becomes thy house, O Lord, for ever!" My spirit was bowed under the force of this truth, and of the apprehended contrast of my own state with the requisition it involved; as also of the reverential influence accompanying this prayer, and the want of it in those forms I had

been so long accustomed to be exercised in. The feeling, affectionate demeanour of Ann Byrd toward me, on taking leave, was also an occasion of encouragement to the hope, that the Lord had not utterly cast me off from *his people*; which designation I was fully persuaded, belonged eminently, though not exclusively, to the Society I had formerly renounced.

If any should be inclined to query what were my evidences in favour of the foregoing position, I might reply: First, That spiritual experience, into which I was introduced while a member by birthright of that communion, and which I was not permitted to regain, or even to receive a satisfactory report of, among any other people: Secondly, The severe judgments and deep convictions I endured, in consequence of having forsaken the Fountain of living mercies: and, Thirdly, I may *now add*, that which I have been at length, through incalculable perils, mercifully permitted to partake of in a reunion with them; even of the pure river of the water of life, to the full restoration and satisfaction of my thirsty, weary soul.

What may be the measure, in which this divine consolation and refreshment may be imparted unto others, individually or collectively, it is not for me to determine; though I have little doubt, that it is at times afforded to all, in some proportion to the sincerity of their desires for it, and fitness for

its reception. But as this latter qualification appears to be the result of purification from the defilements of flesh and spirit, whether originating in the spontaneous productions of unregenerated nature, or imbibed from the corruptions which are in the world; so the more effectual and extensive has been a purification from these, both in principle and practice, the greater will be the fitness of the vessel to be intrusted with it, in this state of being. And though the right hand of christian fellowship may be given to all, and even that of preference to many who are found equally or more faithful to the measure of grace received; it seems to be sealed on my mind, that such as voluntarily relinquish the higher stations in the church universal, in favour of the lower, or, in other words, who neglect the occupation of five talents when committed to them, with a view of being more faithful in the cultivation of one or two, are certainly in danger of missing the approving sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servant;" and thus forsake their own mercies.

About two weeks were passed at Exeter, in the course of which, I made a more consistent reformation in my dress, and fully adopted the distinguishing phraseology of Friends, in testimony of my sincere conviction, that this was a genuine result of their principles: of all this, I carefully and tenderly apprized my dear mother by letter. I had reason

to be satisfied that this sacrifice was accepted ; though not so distinctly called for as I had expected and desired, and as it probably is to many, who are less aware than I was, of the grounds of such duty ; namely, that of a required departure from every relic of corruption, in practice as well as doctrine, which had found its way into professing Christendom ; and among these, the names of days and months in honour of heathen deities, the disuse of the simple style of thou and thee to a single person, and that of all flattering titles to our fellow-creatures, which originated in adulation. I found this sacrifice, as most have done, to be a costly one ; inasmuch as it was calculated, not only to offend the vain and vicious, but to contradict the prejudices of many well-minded and pious people. No marvel, therefore, that my dear parents received me rather coldly, on my return to them ; and I acutely felt their repugnance to be addressed by me in this language ; which, though that of my mother's and my own early education, had been dismissed in our family since the days of my childhood. They, however, made no remarks on the occasion ; except that my father observed, that he thought I had too great an affection for my mother, to displease her on such points ; to which I could only reply, that nothing less than an apprehension of its being my religious duty, could have induced me so to do.

The singularity of my path, I having no companion capable of uniting or sympathizing in my exercises, failed not increasingly to depress my spirits: of this my dear mother being tenderly aware, thought fit to write to some of our near relations, expressing her sense of my suffering, and her wish for my having the comfort of more congenial society. When my beloved sister informed me hereof, such a sweet and peaceful serenity overspread my mind, as I had not before tasted, and as enabled me to say, I am quite satisfied to stay or to go, as may be providentially ordered for me; having not the least wish on the subject.

A kind invitation was, however, soon received from my honoured uncle. Both from himself and my aunt, I met with, as heretofore, a truly christian reception; though the natural expression of my uncle's sincere pleasure, in observing my external conformity with principles from which I had so widely deviated, did not harmonize with the feeling of my heart; which was clothed as with sackcloth, from the sense of past and present unworthiness, and a yet continued estrangement from the joys of God's salvation. But in order to this blessed experience, how important is the scriptural declaration, namely, It is good both to hope and patiently to wait for the salvation of God; as is also that of an excellent, though apocryphal writer, "My son, if thou come to serve the Lord,

prepare thy soul for temptation. Set thy heart aright, and constantly endure, and make not haste in time of trouble." Many encouragements were mercifully afforded me to abide by these exhortations, through opportunities of constantly attending religious meetings; in which a living ministry was often called into exercise, and at times particularly directed to my state; and frequently partaking of the privilege of family or individual visits, from deeply concerned and highly gifted ministers; through whom appeared to descend celestial showers of counsel and encouragement, as from clouds surcharged with spiritual blessings. Among this distinguished number, soon after my arrival in London, were Esther Tuke and Mabel Wigham, of whose company I first partook at the house of my much-respected uncle and aunt Bevan. The latter, my aunt Bevan, was the sister of my own father, and a very amiable as well as exemplary character. These ministering friends addressed me in the consolatory language, originally directed to the deeply-chastised church and people of God, previously to the gospel dispensation; but, doubtless, no less applicable to such individuals, whether under that of the Jewish or christian, as were become or becoming true members of the mystical church; "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest and not comforted; behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with

sapphires ; and I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.”

Deeply contrite was my spirit, under this and similar instances of gracious regard from the Father of mercies ; yet was not my mind so staid upon him, in humble faith and patience, as to witness being kept in that perfect peace, which is promised to such a state. An evidence was, however, secretly afforded me, that the great work of the soul’s sanctification was being carried forward, by the immediate operation and regenerating virtue of the spirit of Christ ; by such increased degrees of purity and separation from spiritual defilements, as I should not have supposed possible, without a more sensible display of that baptism, the fervency of which is justly characterized by *fire*.

Nature was often weary of enduring such long-continued privations of those solaces to flesh and spirit, of which a lively sensibility had been long before awakened in me, and which had been at seasons measurably gratified ; nor did I wisely or sufficiently consider, that seasons of fasting, and even of famine, rightly endured, would become the best preparation, under divine permission and control, to a subsequent more safe and pure enjoyment of blessings temporal and spiritual.

This want of subjection to the cross of Christ, which if patiently endured, after his holy example,

would have been found the power of God unto salvation, opened the door for the re-entrance of the grand enemy, even as a roaring lion; the particulars of which are reserved for the following chapter.

CHAP. III.

HITHERTO, I have had to retrace a state of mind and circumstances, which appear in many instances, to have been the natural result of the unhappy conclusions I had embraced, in departing from the living God, and forsaking those mercies wherewith he had long continued to revisit, in order to recal me ; until he saw meet to withdraw his sacred invitations, and leave me in a condition, in which no capacity seemed to remain of turning toward him, or finding any way of peace and reconciliation with him. Yet have I good reason to believe, it was nothing less than the secret operations of his grace, the effect of his mercy and long-suffering, which enabled me to take a just view of this alienation from him, and to conclude, that if he saw meet to cut the thread of my natural life, I must die without hope of reunion with him, the fountain of blessedness. For although this salutary conviction appeared to gain that gradual ascendancy in my mind, which at length dictated the steps I have recorded, and which proved instrumental in conducting me into a steady search after the renewed discovery of the path of light and life ; and although, in this pursuit, I had been favoured with much instrumental encouragement,

and the hidden communication of a measure of spiritual strength, by which I was enabled to withstand, and even to overcome, some of the corrupt propensities of nature; yet having been, for a long previous season, a voluntary captive in the territories of the grand enemy, he was permitted still further to exercise his dark power over me, in a way I had never expected.

I now proceed to develope a state, which I am only induced thus particularly to describe, from a belief that it may possibly become that of some others; who, like myself, apprehending it altogether singular, may be also led to embrace the dreadful conclusion, which was invariably *mine* for the space of eight months; even that I had commenced on earth an eternal state of separation from divine purity and blessedness. My introduction into this state, so far as I am able to retrace it, was through not keeping the *word of the Lord's patience*, and letting go that measure of faith, which had also been mercifully communicated to me; and that, I believe, with ability to hold it fast, had there not been a giving way to the restless discomfort of my nature, in passing through a long dreary valley of spiritual probation; into which the great enemy obtained such an entrance, that his voice of horrible suggestions could not be distinguished by me, from my own voluntary imaginations. To either of these alternatives, I

became the more exposed, by abiding beyond the needful time, in an outward situation, which had been bountifully provided for me as a temporary shelter. The way had been sweetly opened for my returning home, by the earnest desire of my affectionate connexions for my company; and nothing prevented my concurrence with their wishes, but a latent reluctance to bear the cross, (which was so obviously laid upon me, both in external appearance and mental disposition,) in the circle of our numerous acquaintance at Bath. Thus I gave away my strength; or failed to experience that exercise of it, which, I fully believe, would have been more sensibly afforded, in keeping my proper place. Instead of embracing this right opening for my returning home, I preferred accompanying my worthy uncle and aunt on a journey into Yorkshire; the particular object of which, was the attendance of the first General Meeting at Ackworth, and, in conjunction with other well-qualified individuals, the establishment of the institution at that place: we remained a month in that neighbourhood.

Though I was, by this means, introduced into the society, and partook of the instrumental labours, of many valuable Friends, my condition resembled that of a person surrounded by excellent food, without natural appetite or the power of digestion. Scarcely any portion of spiritual

nourishment appeared to find entrance into my soul; and being also weak in body and animal spirits, the variety of scenes to which I was subjected, seemed rather to dissipate than profitably to engage my attention. I remember passing eight nights successively, without being conscious of any sleep, during our journey homewards; in which we made some stay, in different circles of our friends.

In the course of it, I was once most instructively addressed in a meeting, through the testimony of a worthy minister, George Boon, (who had no outward knowledge of my condition) from the following passage, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God? this is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom God hath sent:" clearly stating to my spiritual understanding, that this work of God was indeed begun (again) in me; and thence deducing the necessity of waiting its gradual accomplishment, and ceasing from my own restless activity. And though, in addition to this mercy, I was also favoured, at some seasons of approaching dismay, with such glances (if I may so express myself) of the light of His countenance, in whose presence only there is fulness of joy, as might have stayed my soul upon him, in humble hope and patient expectation of further mercies; yet, such was the turbulence of my agitated spirit, in the eager desire to possess more

of divine consolation, than my heavenly Father saw meet to entrust me with, that, by the time we had reached home, I seemed to my own distressing perception, to be shut up in darkness, both as to my natural and spiritual faculties. Oh, the dreadful medium, through which I contemplated even the fair face of the outward creation; in which nothing exhibited its wonted appearance or cheering influence. My very physical perceptions seemed to be divested of any degree of pleasurable sensibility; and my intellectual powers were no longer capable of interest in, or application to, any object; except the disconsolating prospect and retrospect of my sad condition.

This I failed not to describe, in strong language, to my valued uncle and aunt; who kindly and judiciously endeavoured to divert and disentangle my mind from impressions, which they believed to be altogether unfounded, and the result of natural causes, heightened by the want of more inward and outward quiet. Finding nothing effectual to calm my troubled spirit, they wisely judged it improper to allow me to be so much in solitude, as I had been accustomed to be, both by retiring to my chamber and walking in the garden; and accordingly concluded to provide a steady serious-minded domestic, who, in the office of waiting-maid, should constantly attend me when not in their company.

Many dismal contrivances, indeed, employed my imagination, concerning the putting an end to my temporal existence, without the possibility of its being discovered to be my own act. For though I had not the least hope, that my misery would end with this life, I retained such a keen sensibility of the mournful result of all my fervent exercises, in seeking to attain that righteousness, the work whereof is peace, and its effect quietness and assurance for ever ; that I thought the alternative of a speedy dissolution preferable to the exposure of so discouraging an instance in the view of others, especially of my near and dear connexions.

But finding no way to effect my wretched purpose, I suffered myself to linger on in joyless, hopeless misery ; which, though not suspended either in my sleeping or waking hours, was by degrees rendered less intense and intolerable, by the employment of reading, though pursued without any interest, but what arose from the renewed conviction of the truths contained, both in the sacred scriptures and the writings of Friends. Alas ! I said to myself, now that the grand adversary has done his worst, and has no further purpose to effect for my destruction, he ceases to fill me with doubts and perplexities.

Could I have found means to procure books, more calculated to divert my attention, I should

not have scrupled to read them; believing that I was no longer capable of any increase of sin, or susceptible of greater punishment than I had certainly in view. My removal with my relations, to their winter residence in London, furnished me with the opportunity of obtaining an interesting novel; but it proved so little available in mitigating my distress, that I never repeated the experiment. Indeed, that experiment had a two-fold object; even that of proving the fidelity of my servant, in her professed attachment to me and desire to fulfil my wishes; which she weakly supposed to be the effect of better judgment, than the cautionary directions she received from my aunt. Having succeeded in procuring the said novel, I resolved to try the possibility of obtaining, by the same means, a bottle of laudanum; with the view of first trying the effect of small doses, and also of having it in my power to take a sufficient quantity to extinguish life, if my anguish should be augmented by the prospect of seeing my beloved nearest connexions. For I expected they would come to London, as usual, in the spring; and I could not bear the idea of being exhibited to them in the state in which I thought myself to be; that of a lost creature. I further concluded, that if the Lord had not utterly cast me off, he would not suffer me to perpetrate this horrid design, but would certainly frustrate my project: and I was

afresh confirmed in my unhappy conclusion, when I found that my maid felt no hesitation in complying with my orders, to purchase two ounces of the deleterious drug, which she supposed was intended only for salutary purposes; and also, that the druggist made no difficulty in selling it to a stranger. After trying its effects a few times, in doses of fifteen drops, which was rather soothing than otherwise, and laying a strict injunction on my maid, never to mention to my uncle and aunt my use of the medicine, the momentous period arrived, in which I resolved on the execution of my purpose. Having heard that my dear parents and other relatives were coming in a few days, I thought that by taking the whole remaining quantity, and secretly destroying the bottle, no one would discover the cause of my death; and awfully deliberating once more on my wretched and undone condition, which now appeared to be totally beyond the further interposition of divine mercy, I bid my maid fetch me the medicine which had done me so much good; when, to my astonishment, she burst into tears; entreating me to forgive her compliance with a most peremptory demand of my aunt, whether I took any medicine without her knowledge; also, with a no less peremptory one, to deliver it up.

Little thought the poor mistaken woman the cause she had, rather to shed tears of joy, in being

thus made the unconscious instrument of saving a fellow-creature from such an act of desperation ; who was also the means of effecting the first important transition, witnessed by me, from a state of total despondency, to the admittance of a ray of hope that the Almighty had not cast me off for ever ; but that having, in the hour of deepest extremity, thus evidently extended his holy hand to rescue from the pit of destruction, he was worthy to be relied on as an all-sufficient Deliverer. Tears of contrition and humility, which had long since been dried up, began to flow ; and faith, which had appeared to be dead, was thus marvellously revived. And though no capacity of real joy or peace was restored, yet encouragement was mercifully afforded, to exert the remains or renewal of every degree of mental power and spiritual strength, in the pursuance of that line of conduct, which had been opened as the path of duty ; and thus to appear before my beloved connexions, neither as a deserter of my high profession, nor a subject of painful anxiety. I now resolved to maintain the utmost degree of apparent tranquillity I could command ; and though still a stranger to any returns of the “joys of God’s salvation,” and in great doubt whether they would ever be again vouchsafed ; to continue seeking and waiting for ability to know and do, and indeed to suffer, whatever he might be pleased further to unfold or to appoint.

Thus was I enabled to meet my dear relations with complacency; and they received me into their circle with unfeigned pleasure and affection.

We continued together several weeks, in the course of which we visited our relations in my native city: and here it was suggested to my parents and myself, that considering the state of spirits to which I had lately been reduced, it were better for me to pass a few months longer, as in the bosom of friends, who could sympathize in my condition, than to return to a circle of different characters at Bath; who would ascribe the whole of my religious course to the effects of religious melancholy. In this we all acquiesced; and, after accompanying my beloved family to London, I returned to Norwich, and remained there, in the house of another kind uncle and aunt, about six months. Here I experienced a considerable revival of my natural powers, which I employed in learning the Latin language, teaching French and geography to my younger cousins, and, with them, studying a little of astronomy and chemistry; which innocent pursuits did not cause me to forget the "one thing needful;" though the opening of my spiritual faculties for the attainment of it, did not keep pace with my capacity for application to inferior objects. I was constant in my attendance of religious meetings; but still felt myself, as in a "dry and barren land where no water is."

Some change of circumstances having occurred in the family in which I resided, a way again opened for my return to my dear parents' house, of which they became renewedly desirous, and to which my reluctances were much removed.

In my way thither, whilst in London, an exercised ministering Friend came into the house where I was; and without any advertence to the intermediate states I had passed through, of which I believe she had received no information, addressed me, in the language of encouragement, to persevere in my wilderness travel towards the land of promise; signifying that my redemption was drawing nigh. Soon after joining my relatives at home, I was made sensible of the secret strivings of divine life in my soul; which afforded me an increase of strength to hold on my way, and again to believe, that He, who had both begun, and at many different seasons renewed a good work in me, would carry it on to the day of the Lord Jesus; the certain revelation of his power and his glory, even as I had formerly seen it in his sanctuary. This favourable change of dispensation took place in the twenty-fifth year of my age.

About two years after my return home, I went with my family to London, where a new trial of faith and obedience awaited me. Previously thereto, I had a dream, which I think may be truly considered, as significant or representative of my

spiritual state; even as it stood in the divine sight. I thought the solemn period was arrived, of the end of this world; and that all the inhabitants of it were about to be received into an eternal state. With an innumerable company of my fellow-creatures, I seemed to be earnestly and anxiously striving for an entrance into heaven; when, to my surprise, I found that we had all a most ready admittance, as though the arms of divine love and mercy were open to receive us. I, accordingly, soon found myself in an element of unspeakable serenity and delight. It might be compared to the mild lustre and warmth of the atmosphere, under the most lovely appearance of the setting sun. I perceived that many, as they entered into this surrounding element, partook of the same; so that they became perfectly illuminated and filled therewith, retaining only the outlines of the human form. But I also observed others, into whom this celestial light seemed to find no entrance, and they remained totally dark or black; of which condition they appeared to be insensible, and carelessly passed along in troops; going, as I was given to understand, to their own place. I then began to examine my own condition minutely; and found, that though I appeared to be generally filled with this divine light, there remained one spot in my bosom, which though no bigger than a spangle, was totally black. This discovery caused me to

doubt whether my happiness was such as it would have been, had that spot been removed ; although, so transcendent was it beyond all I had before conceived, that I said to myself, It will content me throughout eternity. Nor was I capable of feeling the least degree of regret, fear, or pain. Nevertheless, when a company were about to pass by me, who were altogether dark, the thought occurred, that having a portion of the same black nature about me, I might possibly feel the contagion and increased prevalence of their state. However, I was permitted to feel no other influence from them, but what was comparable to a waft of cold air.

Thus I awoke, and deeply ruminated on this extraordinary representation ; which certainly indicated the remainder of something of that hard nature, which even divine light and love, so freely offered, had not yet penetrated, or changed into its own nature ; which, if ever accomplished, must be so, while I might be mercifully continued in a state of mutability.

To return to the outward trial, which now awaited me : it was not indeed, new in kind, being the consideration of a matrimonial subject, of which description other opportunities had been dismissed, without much appeal to the sanction of religious influence : but this assailed me in a more questionable and important form.

A young man of the same religious principles as myself, and of whom I entertained a very favourable opinion, having the preceding year communicated his proposals to my uncle D. B., (who believed it right to discourage his proceedings further) now renewed the avowal of his sentiments and proposals immediately to my mother. She, considering me to be capable of judging for myself, at the age of twenty-seven, committed the conclusion wholly to me; in which others of the family acquiesced, confessing they had formerly sufficiently opposed the introduction of this affair. No sooner was I thus left to feel the full weight of such an important decision, viz. whether the entering into a matrimonial engagement with this person, was consistent with my best interests; the approbation of my heavenly Father; than I was, very unexpectedly to myself, made fully sensible that the prospect was not owned by the evidence of his favour; and on turning my view to the rejective side of the question, I had the confirmation of a long-continued flow of precious peace in my soul.

Thus mercifully guided, as by the divine eye, I lost no time in apprizing the young man's mother (a friend whom I justly honoured) of this unequivocal result of my earnest exercise to be rightly directed; and was both surprised and disappointed to find her reluctant to admit, that such a persuasion arose from so deep a ground. She urged

my giving her son an opportunity of pleading his own cause ; alleging, that a negative was equally in my power, after doing him that justice, as before ; and I, in deference to her judgment, not altogether unlike the poor prophet formerly, who yielded to the recommendation of another prophet older than himself, in opposition to immediate divine direction, acquiesced in the united desire of herself and her family, in admitting his visits. Thus was I conducted into a labyrinth, from which I saw not how to extricate myself. After a month thus passed, with little real satisfaction, though without the discovery of any trait in the character of my friend, which would render him unworthy of my regard, the time came for returning with my family to Bath ; and I found it some relief to be freed from his society. This induced me to request by letter, he would desist from his purpose of shortly following me, at least till I could feel more freedom to receive his visits. His family and himself considered this prohibition as not binding ; and in a few days he made his appearance at my parents' house. I received him with unpremeditated coldness, which I could not conceal ; but passing it over, as the effect of my natural temperament, he endeavoured to make the best use of his opportunity to obtain a more certain place in my affections, which were indeed less restrained by my own design than by a secret overruling providence ; so

that I often wondered I could not love one, who nevertheless appeared both to myself and others, an amiable object.

Some insight, however, which I occasionally obtained into my friend's temper and character, might have convinced me, we were not rightly suited to each other. But as I could find no palpable objection to make, the affair between us seemed to be going on, though heavily enough on my part. He again left me to ruminate, as I often did, on my singular circumstances; but shortly returned, in hopes of ensuring the ground which appeared to be gained, by much continuance of intercourse. I then endeavoured, but in vain, to meet his expectations more acceptably; concluding, there was no alternative to be adopted with honour, but that of becoming his wife. But the night of his arrival, being the last of the week, I was favoured with a dream, which I can ascribe to nothing less than the interposition of the heavenly Shepherd, to preserve me from inextricable thralldom.

I seemed to see myself in a narrow enclosure, surrounded by high inaccessible mountains, which nearly obscured the light of the sun from my central field of action. I earnestly sought a way of escape, and resolved that, if it could be found, I would encounter any difficulties in pressing through it, so that I might regain a land of light and liberty.

At length, an extremely narrow fissure, scarcely discernible, from its darkness, was presented to my view, into which I pressed; and soon awoke, through the struggle of my earnest efforts to escape thereby.

This dream appeared to be certain, and its interpretation sure; both as a just representation of my case, and the discovery of a way out of it: and yielding my mind to this impression, it once more became the receptacle of such a flow of peace, for about two hours, that I could no longer doubt it to be an experience, given me as an earnest of the deliverance I should ultimately feel, in embracing the narrow, dark, and rugged passage of determined refusal, rather than in remaining under the shackles of an engagement, in which I was thought to be involved; though never by my own express consent.

The next, being first-day, I concluded to defer my heavy task till after meeting; where I continued to feel its full obligation on me. Accordingly, on returning home, and first fetching a bible at my friend's request, I laid it on the table, informing him I had a subject to communicate, which must suspend our reading; and then, with a degree of firmness which was not my own, proceeded to impart the final conclusion which I had been qualified to adopt, under a feeling, which proved to my own mind a confirmation of its

rectitude. The effect on him appeared to be overwhelming; but gradually recovering the unexpected stroke, he only solicited permission to remain in our family a few days longer; during a part of which time, I could admit his company with a kind of sisterly complacency. It soon, however, became burdensome to my best feelings, and at my renewed instance he consented to depart; but it was with a secret hope, that this impression of mine would in time give way to the reiterated interference of his excellent mother: and he was therefore earnest to prolong the time of suspense, till after he had joined his own family.

His absence caused no alteration in my views; and when the renewed attempts of himself and his friends, by letter, to invalidate the cogency of my motives, proved ineffectual, the effects of their disappointment and dissatisfaction made me acutely sensible of the ruggedness, difficulty, and darkness of such a way of escape, as I had been reduced to adopt; and which might have been all spared, with more real justice to the other party, had I been true to the first spiritual impulse afforded me on the occasion.

I have been diffuse in the above relation, because I would impress upon the minds of young persons, particularly of my own sex, the great importance of being firm and faithful to divine impressions, when favoured with them; and which,

I believe, would be vouchsafed to all, who are sincerely resigned to be guided and governed by the Spirit of truth. But the dark passage, which I had seen in my dream, might be thought to have a further and deeper signification; as an emblem of the dark, disconsolate state of mind, which became my subsequent experience; even of a spiritual baptism, through which I had still to pass, in order to my regaining that state of light and liberty which I had formerly known; and which, had I been more faithful, patient, and persevering in my pursuit of it, I might probably have much sooner attained.

The depth and distress of this second plunge, even of my whole nature, appeared greatly to exceed the first already described; which had never been, to my own apprehension, completely recovered.

This I compared to the being *twice dead*, plucked up by the roots; and, if once saved as a brand from the burning, was now fit for nothing, but to be cast into unquenchable fire.

These dismal ideas continued to assail me, till they at length completely swallowed up every pleasurable sensibility of my nature; leaving me only the power of concealing from my beloved family the extent of my misery, under the profession of bodily disease; which, indeed, also pervaded me. The capacity for sleep, and appetite

or relish of my food, seemed to forsake me ; and I became accordingly much prostrated in bodily as well as mental strength. My rational faculties remained entirely unimpaired, but without any power of activity.

Soon after my introduction into this state, several ministering Friends, in their way to the Yearly Meeting, came to Bath, having previously requested a public meeting to be appointed there ; the information of which, with the necessary steps concerning it, was committed to me : but the letter not being duly received, the friends arrived by the time it had reached my hands ; and being unable to go to them, I requested my beloved sister to make the effort on my behalf, and explain the case ; as also to inform them how very ill I was. She then querying if I would like to see any of them, I replied, If they propose it, I should wish for a visit ; which they failed not to do.

Apprehensive that they might have a sense of my *lost condition* (as it appeared in my view), and fearful that the dreadful truth might thus become known to my affectionate sister, I entreated to see them alone ; believing they could not utter the language of consolation or encouragement, to *one* whose case seemed without parallel on scripture record, unless they should be authorized to compare it, in a spiritual sense, with Lazarus in a literal one ; when he was said to have lain dead

four days, and unfit to be exposed to human inspection.

The friends who came, were Rebecca Jones and George Dilwyn, from America, and Lydia Hawksworth, from Bristol. I received them in my bed, not having strength to sit up. After accosting me with tender sympathy, the two first successively addressed me, in language the most appropriate to my own apprehension of my state, and excellently calculated to raise my hopes beyond it; making the very comparison which had been suggested to my own mind; and declaring in the words of the text, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God," they intreated me faithfully to rely on His power, who remained to be the resurrection and the life; in whom, those who believe, though they were dead, should live; and those who lived, and believed on him, should never die. This being confirmed by the other dear friend, they took leave, with heartfelt consolation; of which, I greatly regretted not having suffered my dear sister to be a witness; though I believe they made her a partaker of it, by expressing to her their satisfaction in the visit.

Though thus mercifully recalled to the exercise of faith, my sensations, bodily and mental, remained so full of anguish (not the effect but the cause of my distressing suggestions), that I concluded it impossible for me to continue the

suppression of their appearance from my beloved family ; and that it would be better to solicit my mother's consent to remove to a more quiet and retired situation, as a temporary boarder in the family of some friend in the country. This being approved, she, with my sister, kindly accompanied me to the house of a widow, who, with her sons, was in the farming business, about twenty-four miles from Bath.

Here I was visited by several feeling Friends, who administered to my benefit, by personal attentions, conversation, and ministry ; all concurring to raise and cherish a hope, that by the renewed operations of divine love and mercy, I should at length witness restoration to perfect peace. Among the number, who were thus drawn towards me in the bands of gospel charity, were Lydia Hawksworth aforesaid, C. Phillips, H. Stephenson, Joseph Ball, with others in the family and neighbourhood.

Some domestic arrangements requiring my removal from that place, I was recommended to another, which proved by no means equally agreeable. While so circumstanced, I was, however, privileged with the company and ministerial communications of some valuable Friends ; particularly, M. Jenkins, from America, and her companion, M. Higman, afterwards Naftel, whose encouraging testimonies accorded with those already received ; yet nothing of this kind was permitted to raise

me from the pit of distress and deep dismay, in which my whole nature was immersed.

A just sense of this my condition was conveyed to the mind of Mary Davis of Minehead; a precious young friend, then at a distance from me, and with whom I had little personal acquaintance; by means of a remarkable dream, which represented me to her as at the bottom of a deep dark pit, from which it appeared to be her proper business to invite and draw me up, by many successive efforts. These proving at length successful, in raising me from this dark abode, it became her further care, to lead me along a narrow, winding, and gradually ascending path, round a high mountain, fenced in on the side next the precipice, by reeds and rushes thickly set, on which she directed me to take hold; and that she remitted not her care, till we both gained the summit, where she saw me safely enclosed in a fine green pasture, significant of that spiritual place, where the Shepherd of his people feeds his flock, and causes them to lie down and rest, as at noon-day; even where nothing is permitted to make afraid.

This dream coinciding with an impression, which her mind had previously received, that it was her duty to come and persuade me to accompany her back to her mother's house (where preparation for my reception and residence was readily made), she did so, and prevailed on me to adopt her plan. I

was also accompanied thither by my beloved sister, who shortly left me, under the kind care of my excellent friend ; and this place became my abode for several months, in the course of which, we had the privilege of the company of Rebecca Jones and Sarah Grubb, for about a week ; whose correspondent sense of my state, and final escape from it, was a confirmation to the feelings of my endeared companion, and a fresh incitement to the exercise of faith on my part ; which yet scarcely ever amounted to the *hope* of deliverance. Often would my tenderly-sympathizing friend advert to her dream, in order to the revival of the latter ; which began to be fulfilled, in my being a little raised from the depth of my darksome dwelling.

About the same time, request was made to my friend, by her sister, S. Young, that she would give her personal assistance to her, in the establishment of a boarding school for girls, at Milverton ; calculated for the accommodation of Friends, not in affluent circumstances ; where they might obtain a guarded and religious education for their daughters, together with suitable instruction.

The opening of this prospect, as a sphere of peculiar usefulness for my valuable friend, soon obtained my concurrence ; consistently with my renewed resolution, that if I could do no good in my generation, I would do no harm, nor be the means of frustrating the benefit that might be

afforded by others: and believing I could not now even live, without my friend, whose sweet society was a secret cordial to me, I proposed accompanying her to Milverton, engaging an apartment for ourselves and a servant, in the school-house; and thus securing an opportunity for the exercise of her talents, in the line proposed, without our separation.

Thus, also, was an opportunity furnished, for the exertion of my own talents; to the attempt of which, I was at first very averse; being sensible, that whatever degree of qualification or ability I might have formerly possessed, it was greatly reduced by the debilitated state of my bodily and mental powers: but being prevailed on to begin, by taking one child at a time, into our parlour, to instruct in reading and grammar, the task became gradually, not only easy, but interesting; and continuing to pursue and enlarge it, I became capable of spending about six hours a day, in the occupation of school teaching; not even so important to the benefit of the learners as to my own.

In this situation I constantly attended meetings, both near and at a distance, as they came in course; keeping two horses for the performance of journeys to the latter, when an increase of bodily strength, which was promoted by the frequent use of horse-exercise about home, admitted of my

travelling. The mutual satisfaction of re-association with my family was also repeatedly obtained ; both by their visits to me and mine to them, during their summer residences in Devonshire : indeed, no one could suspect from outward appearance, but that the state of my inmost mind was correspondent with my improved external condition.

This however was not the case. I seemed at best, to be but faintly persevering in the arduous path encompassing the high mountain ; laying some hold, indeed, to keep me from falling down the precipice, on the *reeds* and *rushes*, which were bountifully provided ; which seemed in an especial manner, to indicate the numerous opportunities of ministerial aid, which were mercifully vouchsafed me in this place. One of the most memorable of these, was that of a visit from precious Mary Ridgway and Jane Watson, during an early period of my sojourn at Milverton. The former, in a most striking manner, describing my state, by the similitude of being tossed with a tempest during a long season, in which neither sun, moon, nor stars, had appeared for many days ; called forth my sensibility into floods of tears ; which continued not less copiously to flow, while she adverted, in the most consolatory language, to her clear prospect of the merciful deliverance, which was yet in store for me, to be revealed in due season.

Among the many comforters, thus raised up

throughout this long night of darkness, besides those already mentioned, were Ann Byrd and Mary Were, Sarah Stephenson, S. Squire, and, most eminently, my endeared companion, M. Davis. But all these special aids, highly salutary as they were in preparing my mind for the blessed change of dispensation, which was graciously designed to become my experience, and, indeed, to give me an insight into the nature and efficacy of true gospel ministry, beyond what I had ever before conceived; were not permitted to effect that restoration and resurrection from a state of spiritual death, which the Almighty was pleased at length to afford, by the immediate operation of his own power.

After nearly two years spent at Milverton, my beloved M. D. received a matrimonial proposal; to which she would not accede, till assured that it had my concurrence; and also, that her future home should ever afford an asylum for me, when consistent with my inclination to make it so.

Previously to this event, a memorable connexion, in the line of christian friendship, had taken place between myself and a distinguished character; even in a more extensive sphere than that of our religious Society; the honourable Richard Reynolds. Eminent as he was for natural endowments, temporal possessions, and religious attainments, he rather sought than declined the cultivation of mental intercourse, with the feeblest of the flock

and family, in whom he discovered the evidences that they had been with Jesus, and were sincerely desiring to be of the number of his true followers.

My lot had been frequently cast in the company of this worthy person, before I became a prey to the melancholy consequences of successive infidelities: and as it then cost me a feeling of regret, that my comparative youth and inexperience were likely to preclude me from the high privilege of equal friendship with such an exalted character; who was my senior by twenty years; so it added to the poignancy of my many disappointed hopes, that I could no longer remain to be a subject of his partial fatherly regard.

In this I was happily mistaken. He had, for many years, cultivated an intimate friendship with my much-loved M. D.; towards whom his peculiar notice was first attracted, not only by her well-known amiable and estimable qualities, but by the circumstance of her having experienced a severe trial, in the loss of an equally valuable character, with whom she was about to enter into a matrimonial engagement; and who was shipwrecked in his passage from Ireland, in company with Edith Lovell, a valuable minister, then returning from a religious visit to that country.

Thus sympathy had formed a primary link in the chain of their enduring friendship: and sympathy, of a no less uniting influence, had bound the heart

of this great and good man, in the bonds of a more than paternal friendship, with a less worthy individual; which not only flourished with unabated vigour, to the end of his mortal course, but continues to survive the interruption of temporal separation, in the heart of one, who cherishes the bright hope of joining him in those eternal mansions, where sin and sorrow are no more.

My companion and myself being invited by our mutually-venerated friend, and his estimable wife, to pass some time with them at their habitation in Shropshire, though complied with, on my part, in a state of secret mourning, for the want of that which no created blessing could supply, we embraced the opportunity; which proved a memorable one, not for any experienced deliverance from my disconsolate condition, but for confirmed and augmented gracious promises thereof, through the powerful and impressive ministry of my subsequently endeared friend, Deborah Darby, as well as other anointed and appointed instruments.

To return to my spiritual history: It is worthy of observation, that the restoration so impressively predicted, was very gradual in its progress; commencing in the revival of the intellectual powers and animal spirits, which (though never so wholly absorbed as to indicate any degree of positive derangement) had been sensibly obscured and depressed at times, even to feelings of desperation.

On our return from Shropshire, being renewedly encouraged by my beloved companion, I entered, by degrees, on the task of instructing the children in such branches of education, as they had not the opportunity of cultivating by any other means.

When my precious associate, M. D., on her marriage with J. M., removed to Ringwood, I followed her thither in the course of a few months; which interval was passed by me, partly with my own kind family, and partly under the auspices of my dear and honoured friends, R. and R. R., at Bath. Though my bodily health rapidly declined, the state of my mind and spirits continued gradually to improve, in my secret experience; a capacity being restored, for the enjoyment and grateful estimate of outward blessings, together with a sense, which had long been extinct, of the beauties of the creation, and the solace of dwelling among exemplary characters.

Having enjoyed a peaceful residence of some months at Ringwood, another invitation from my valued Shropshire friends, induced my *temporary* absence from it (as I then considered it) in the spring of 1791. After attending a Quarterly Meeting at Alton, in which my state, resembling that of Lazarus raised from the grave, but bound hand and foot with grave clothes; was eminently ministered to by worthy D. Townsend; proceeding thence to Melksham, to the abode of another

preciously-endowed individual, I was there made sensible of an immediate divine visitation to my soul; the first, of which I had been distinctly conscious, during two years and nine months. Going with dear Sarah Stephenson, afterwards, to visit another pious servant of the great Master, C. G., who had recently performed a religious visit to Ireland, but was then on a sick bed, from which she did not recover; she, most unexpectedly, addressed me in language suited to that state of humbling admiration (almost to doubting the reality) of the mercy I had recently experienced; namely, "It is I, be not afraid."

Thus strengthened and encouraged, I proceeded on my journey; and, soon after my arrival at the place of destination, received the full and blessed accomplishment of all that had been mercifully afforded me, for the maintenance of faith and hope, while vision was withheld; even an indubitable and joyful experience, as well as assurance, that the Lord was indeed risen, and would go before me in the way of his appointments. Thus was his appropriate character, as the Resurrection and the Life, manifested within me to the restoration of my soul; with all its spiritual faculties enlarged by the sense of his presence, in which there is fulness of joy, and of those pure pleasures, which are at his right hand for evermore. This blessed transition took place in the thirtieth year of my age.

In this restored condition, I have been favoured to remain, even to the present time ; a period of thirty-seven years ; not without many successive changes, comparable to those of day and night, summer and winter ; not without the intervention of clouds and even storms, both spiritual and temporal, which alike fulfil the divine word ; but without any interval of despondency, or distrust of that unfathomable wisdom and mercy, which will, sooner or later, be exemplified in all his dispensations.

CHAP. IV.

A CONTINUANCE of complete rest and enjoyment in the pure Life, does not appear to be the allotment of man in this his probationary state. Many outward conflicts and trials were permitted to impress me with this truth, and tended to preserve me from an inordinate attachment to those blessings of providence, with which I was bountifully indulged.

With regard to my spiritual state, I was made sensible, that the terms on which only it would be maintained and exalted, were the occupation of the talents with which I was entrusted, according to the will of the great Giver, in the obedience of faith. While in the zenith of this favoured condition, during a long visit among my beloved friends at the Dale, a proposal was submitted to my consideration, to become a resident among them; by accepting the kind invitation of my paternal friend and his wife, to remain under their roof as a settled inmate.

This change of residence, though seconded by the concurrent approbation of my own relations, and the judgment of all friends who had been consulted on the occasion; was not concluded on, without a previous return to Ringwood, and

reconsideration of the prospect, in conjunction with my precious friend, M. M.

Having, before our recent separation, looked towards continuing together for life, the idea of a permanent one was deeply felt by us both. But, as we hoped for many renewed opportunities of meeting, and the result of my earnest exercise on the subject, was a confirmation, that this step was consistent with the clearest intimations of divine direction with which my mind was favoured, it was at length adopted; not without my having had two very significant dreams, which were accurately fulfilled in the event.

The tenor of my dreams amounted to a prediction, that many unthought-of trials and difficulties would attend me, in this new situation; from the painful influences of which, I should ultimately be delivered without any contrivance of my own.

A further confirmation of the expediency of this removal, was afforded me, in the course of two years more, by an event, the most deeply-affecting to my nature, that I had ever yet sustained. Having enjoyed a sweet season of religious and social communion, with my beloved friend, M. M., for several months, at Ringwood, including the time of her first confinement; and returning to her, on the approach of the birth of a second child, our feelings were often peculiarly exercised, in a manner tending to prepare us for an event (which was

too earnestly deprecated by me, to admit the reception of its probability) to which my beloved friend appeared to stand resigned, and persisted in giving me many little directions, to be attended to in case of her removal, with cheerful composure.

The period arriving, not till long after the expected approach of her being taken ill, a solemn intimation of its affecting issue was instantaneously impressed on my mind, on being summoned to attend her, at six in the morning.

The ineffable sweetness and serenity of her countenance and deportment seemed, however, to chase away fears thus induced; and, indeed, the constant claims on my personal attentions, which were furnished by the rapid increase of her bodily sufferings, left me no opportunity for anticipation of the future. Throughout the day, these appeared to exceed what human nature, unsupported by divine aid, could have sustained, at least with the retention of the rational faculties. But neither did the exercise of mental power, nor the increase of divine grace, in any degree appear to fail her; the latter being most impressively evinced, by the unremitting exhibition of faith, patience, and resignation: and such was the sense of divine support, mercifully vouchsafed to my own mind, as suspended its natural proneness to fear and anxiety; preserving it in a state of solemn dependence on the arm of Omnipotence.

Within an hour after the birth of the child, appearances of danger occurred with so much violence, that my precious friend, being convinced that no human aid would be permitted to become effectual, desired that her husband might be called; to whom she audibly expressed her belief, that the period of final separation was come; tenderly exhorting him to give her up. She uttered a fervent prayer for divine acceptance, and then turning towards me, with a like affectionate exhortation, and folding her arms about me, being supported in mine, she sweetly and quietly breathed her last; leaving me in doubt, whether this were truly the case, till the words were uttered in the secret of my soul, "The spirit is gone to God who gave it."

Memorable were the influences of divine favour and compassionate regard, vouchsafed to my otherwise disconsolate mind, under the privation of a temporal friend, who had been made to me as a guardian angel; in which character, more highly exalted, I was at times enabled to contemplate her still. But so weak was my texture, both mental and bodily, that under the great disappointment of my affectionate wishes for her continuance with me in mutability, I sometimes deprived myself of the sweet consolation, that seemed to await a more patient and resigned state of spirit; and my health, which had been, for many years, deeply

undermined, so sunk under this conflict, that my life seemed likely to become the price of my loss.

Worse consequences than this threatened me from the old enemy of my soul's peace, in a way not easy to describe ; but it is also gratefully to be acknowledged, that when coming in as a flood, and resisted only through faith in divine sufficiency, the Spirit of the Lord was renewedly known to lift up a standard against him.

After spending a month longer, in this mournfully interesting scene, in which, at times, the comforts of the Lord were secretly extended to delight our souls, and the solaces of pious tender friendship, afforded through various channels, to assuage our grief ; after disposing of the papers of my dear deceased friend, I returned to my own family at Bath : but remaining too short a time with them, for the full satisfaction of my best feelings, I proceeded to my home at the Dale.

This little act of my wonted impatience to accomplish an object, which, in its due season, would have been rightly embraced, was attended with its consequent and salutary disappointments ; as, in providential kindness, they finally proved. The expectation I had indulged, of enjoying an effective balm to my recent wound, from the succours of religious friendship, in the instances of my parental friends, and of precious D. Darby and R. Young, was much frustrated ; by the absence of the two

latter on a religious visit, and the shortly-intended departure of the former, on a visit to their connexions in Lancashire.

My health and spirits renewedly sunk under this privation of creaturely comfort, and left me for some time a prey to the assaults of the enemy; who, like a dragon, seemed ready to devour and destroy me at once, by the most overwhelming influence of his tormenting power. But, through adorable goodness, my mind was never permitted to loose its hold on, or withdraw its confidence from Him, whom I had experienced to have power to save; yea, to have all power in his hands; and in keeping the eye and expectation of my soul on him alone, I was not only administered to, in this wilderness of affliction; even memorably so, by the instrumental labours of my beloved friend, S. Appleby, who resided near me; but in the Lord's time enabled, both in peace and patience, to possess my soul, until an entire and merciful change of dispensation took place.

I have reason to believe, that the remarkable experience above recited, though the depth of it is not to be fully expressed; was of the nature of a preparatory baptism for the work, which, in unerring wisdom, was appointed me.

I have often doubted the expediency of making known to others, much of the peculiar dealings of the blessed Master with his servants, concerning

their call and qualification for the work of the ministry; though, doubtless, many valuable instructions and cautions have been hereby held forth for their benefit. But believing that the preparation for this service, and the manner of its being brought forth, are variously conducted in the case of different individuals; I have apprehended danger might accrue to some minds, from a comparison of their own experience with that which they find thus recorded; either in concluding it sufficiently similar, to warrant a belief of their being called to this work, when not rightly fitted for it, or in supposing that the marks and evidences of such a call, though truly vouchsafed to themselves, are insufficient; being in some respects dissimilar to those they have contemplated in the experience of others. Something of the latter sort kept me long from yielding even a faithful reception to impressions, which were made on my mind, both immediately, and through the ministration of many eminent instruments; who apprehended that the time was come for my declaring unto others, something of what the Lord had done for my soul, long before I could believe it was even near; or that the evidence of the Master's will was so strong, as that I should, as far as in me lay, *prepare* to obey it: though an intimation, that this would be his requiring, was afforded me at least ten years before.

But He, who knew my backwardness was not from opposition to his will, was pleased to make a way for my liberation from bondage, and to let the oppressed seed of his own pure life go free.

While sitting in a retired frame, in my own apartment, my mind was most unexpectedly opened into a prospect of the western counties, and carried toward them, as on the wings of faith and love. This I received as an intimation of his gracious favour, which rejoiced my soul; but not being accompanied with specific instructions, respecting any outward steps to be taken in consequence of this impression, I remained, as assuredly I ought, in a state of quiet acquiescence; in which the language was virtually adopted, Be it unto me according to thy will; not divulging the subject to any creature.

In the course of two weeks, I received a letter from a highly-valued friend, who had commenced acquaintance with me from motives of christian sympathy, when in nearly my lowest state of mental depression; and cultivated it also after my recovery, on several occasions, on which our lots were cast together in friendly association; namely, Martha Haworth; informing me, of her religious concern to prepare for a visit to the western counties; and, with great caution, intimating her apprehension, that a like *mantle*, as she signifi-

cantly termed it, was cast over me, as her designed companion.

The feelings attending my reception of this proposal, were such as to induce my acknowledging, that it was like face answering face in a glass ; and I accordingly communicated the whole circumstance to my parental friends, R. and R. Reynolds.

Some difficulty arose, in consideration of my not standing in the station of either minister or elder ; and therefore not likely to obtain a certificate, as one under religious concern, nor eligible to move without one.

This unexpected demur, under which, I was enabled to resign the event wholly to His ordering, whose pointings of duty I had desired in humble simplicity to follow ; occasioned me searchings of heart, and a desire more perfectly to try the fleece ; the result of which, was a confirmation to my own mind, of the validity of the requiring ; which was cordially acquiesced in by many friends of our Monthly Meeting, who had long been aware of my secret exercises, and encouraged my proceeding, in a private capacity, with my estimable friend.

In the early part of this journey, I was favoured, not only with ability to participate deeply, though silently, in the labours of my companion ; but also with the lively impression of spiritual subjects, mostly presented in the language of scripture.

Such was her sense, and that of some others where my lot was cast, that the Master was indeed come and calling for me, in order more conspicuously to manifest his power in and through me; that they seemed to think there was, on my part, a withholding more than was meet: but not having been made sensible, that it was the voice of immediate requiring, for me to utter the impressions I received, and being earnestly desirous that this, whenever afforded, might be unequivocally the case, I was mercifully preserved from bringing forth that premature fruit, which is void of the blessing.

Here I would observe, that while it is a valuable privilege of true gospel ministry, to be thus directed to unfold portions of divine counsel, concerning others who may be under preparation for the like work; yet, in this, as in other special cases, times and seasons remain in the Father's hand, and are patiently and humbly to be waited for, by those who would learn to know and follow the voice of the true Shepherd; distinguishing it, not only from that of the stranger, but even from that of a fellow-servant, who, though commissioned to sound the trumpet for preparation, is not likely to be intrusted with the absolute word of command.

At length this word was distinctly heard, and its dictates clearly understood, in the secret of my soul; but under such a sweet sense of spiritual

tranquillity, that I was ready to conclude, it must fall short of that powerful requiring I had formed an expectation of; and being directed only to an individual, with whom my companion had proposed a religious opportunity, I ventured to decline the part assigned me; not in wilful disobedience, but under the idea, that a still further confirmation would be thus obtained, that such an exposure was the indispensable requisition of my heavenly Father: a confirmation was, indeed, afforded me.

The withdrawing of heavenly light and peace immediately succeeded. Many gloomy seasons were my portion, before such right exercise became renewed in my mind, by the spirit of judgment and burning, as rendered it more quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord.

In this state, it was made plain to me, that a visit to the islands of Guernsey and Jersey was the next step pointed out by our great Leader; before it was so apprehended by my dear companion. In this we accordingly engaged; being the first female Friends who had appeared to be called to this service, except our dear friend, M. Naftel, who had become a resident in Guernsey.

The humbling difficulties, of a new kind to me, which attended this little undertaking, together with the sense of divine favour, which was extended in its accomplishment, proved a further means of breaking down those creaturely reluct-

ances, (to which my nature was deeply prone) thus to stand forth to the eye of the world, as a feeble advocate for the best of causes, and encounter all that might appertain to so awful a vocation.

After landing at Poole, we believed it in our line of duty, to commence a family visit in that place; in which we were acceptably joined by Jane Shipley and Morris Birkbeck. In the first opportunity of the kind, a gentle impression was soon afforded me, to express a sentence; but considering it so much fainter than the one I had ventured to suppress, I suffered an hour to pass in obscure and conflicting silence, before I yielded to break it; which being at length made humbly willing to do, the little offering was followed by a copious and valuable communication from my beloved friend and companion; and with such a precious evidence in my own mind, of divine acceptance, that I believe I never hesitated more, in the course of that journey (which occupied nine months), whether in the families, meetings for Friends, or those appointed for the public, which were numerous, to endeavour faithfully to fulfil the service appointed me; which appeared to be, generally, that of *opening the door* into a wide field of ministerial labour, on the part of my endeared and highly-qualified companion.

CHAP. V.

HAVING brought my narrative to the period of my introduction into the solemn engagement of the public ministry, I purpose to add a summary view of my travelling exercises in that line.

It is not my intention, however, to enter into a detail of those exercises ; for though it may be humbly acknowledged, they have been productive of deep instruction to myself, and fruitful of those blessed results which, in unmerited mercy, are awarded for every act of faithful dedication to divine requisition ; yet I do not consider them as affording any important addition to the ample communications, which are already before the public, on subjects of this nature ; and which, however useful in ascertaining the state of our religious Society at different periods, or however interesting, in a more limited point of view, to those who are engaged in like ministerial services, are less attractive and less profitable to the generality of readers, than a more copious display of that kind of individual experience, in which all classes may so far participate, as to be able to derive from it caution, counsel, or encouragement, adapted to their respective conditions.

For however peculiarly deep may be the exercises of those, who are under preparation for the work of the ministry; and however varied that depth of conflict, which, in some instances, may bear a proportion to past deviations from the path of known duty; yet the nature of such exercises, in every variety of circumstances, is not wholly dissimilar from that, of which all will have some taste, who become the adopted children and servants of the Lord. Blessed indeed is the man, whom the Lord thus chooseth, even though it be in the furnace of affliction; and causeth to approach unto him; yea, blessed is he, whom the Lord chasteneth, and teacheth him out of his law. And therefore, not only to those who are inquiring the way to Zion, with their faces thitherwards, but even to such whose spiritual eyes have scarcely yet been opened to behold this "city of the saints' solemnities," the language of tender invitation may be held forth, to come and see and taste for themselves, "how great is that goodness, which the Lord has laid up for those who fear him, which he hath wrought for them who trust in him, before the sons of men."

With a view to render such subjects the more familiar to juvenile readers, the writer has deemed it expedient, to let them stand connected on paper, as they do in her own mind, with that succession of outward incidents, which, if they have not much

distinguished her course from that of many others, may serve to evince to those, whose path is equally exposed to an opposition of sentiments and examples from those around them, that faithful is he who hath called them, through whatever particular path of duty, "to glory and to virtue;" who will not suffer them to be tempted, above what they are able to resist by the proportionable extension of that grace, which is sufficient for them, and which is still "made perfect in weakness."

Having known this assertion, in some degree, verified in my own experience; and having also, as the apostle expresses it, "found grace to be faithful," at least in some small measure, as already related; I was strengthened to enter into an arduous field of labour, in the thirty-fifth year of my age, in conjunction with my beloved friend, Martha Haworth; whose line of ministerial service was much towards persons not of our Society.

The remarkable extension of divine favour, which was sensibly afforded on these occasions, established in my mind a persuasion, in which I have since been much confirmed, that the seed of the kingdom sown in many hearts, even the divine principle imparted to every human heart, is often powerfully visited and nurtured to the production of substantial fruit, through such instrumentality; although the instances are far from numerous, of

obvious conversion to the whole of our principles and testimonies; but a preparation may doubtless be hereby effected, for the further reception of the pure truth in a more conspicuous manner, as the impediments of deep-rooted prejudice become gradually removed.

After being the privileged companion of my beloved friend, during a part of eight successive years, in which we visited all the western counties, most of the southern, eastern, midland, and northern, with Scotland, and were engaged for several months in and about the metropolis, I had to encounter the very unexpected trial of being deprived of her by death; occasioned by a painful disease, which she bore with the most exemplary resignation and fortitude; holding fast her faith in the sufficiency of divine power, to raise her above its mortal tendency, if that should be the purpose of his providence towards her. From the impressions her mind had received, of the extensive line of future service, to which she was thus prepared to stand resigned, some of her friends were induced too fondly to anticipate such an issue. But a different event appeared to be that of divine appointment; and He, who calls things that are not as though they were, has an unquestionable right to vary his dispensations towards all his creatures, and to exercise his most devoted approved servants in the prospect of duties, in which,

as in the case of Abraham, the unreserved will is accepted for the deed.

The lamented decease of my valuable companion, as in the midst of the field of arduous and successful labour in her Master's cause, and which her severe illness, of many months' continuance, could not induce her to decline, awfully impressed my mind with the apprehension of an irremediable loss to myself; and which was the more acutely felt, from the circumstance of its occurring at length so unexpectedly, that though I set out on a journey of one hundred miles, on the first intimation of her danger, in hope of becoming the intimate companion of her suffering, I was met by the affecting account of her dissolution, within thirty miles of her abode; and thus deprived of the desired consolation of a parting interview.

After paying the last tribute of affection to her memory, in conjunction with other nearly-interested and attached friends, I returned to the Dale.

About three years previously to this event, I sustained a deep exercise to my feelings, natural and spiritual, in the termination by death, of the long and suffering illness of my beloved mother. It had been my constant practice, once or more often, during every year of my separation from my own family, to make them a visit of some weeks or months, whether in London, Bath, or Devonshire; which were the places of their annual alternate

abode ; considering it both my duty and privilege, thus to avail myself of that kindness and affection, which were granted me by these endeared connexions.

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The circumstance of my friend M. Haworth's decease was not permitted to prove the termination of my travelling exercises ; and they were accordingly resumed, after a little suspension, with a dear and deeply-exercised friend, who was much my junior in years, Ann Dymond, of Exeter ; towards whom my mind was unexpectedly drawn, in near sympathy and gospel fellowship, during a visit to my nearest relations in that neighbourhood. With this dear friend, in the course of about seven years more, I retraced much of the field of labour I had before traversed ; particularly all the western, the eastern, and southern counties, including some meetings in London and its neighbourhood ; in all which places, except the last-mentioned, my companion found her mind engaged to appoint many meetings for the public. In addition to these engagements, we were enabled to accomplish a visit to the Isle of Wight, and to the Scilly Isles, for the like purpose. This last undertaking was rendered especially memorable, by the preservation and safe direction granted us, in circumstances of peculiar trial ; the particulars of which will not be uninteresting to some readers.

It was in the second month of the year 1805,

during the late war, when the event of a capture at sea was considered not improbable, that we proposed to embark for the Scilly Islands; being furnished, by Friends at Falmouth, with letters of recommendation and credit on France and Spain. When about to sail from Penzance, about six in the evening, we were accosted by the post-master, in our way to the vessel; and kindly urged by him, and many others of the town's-people, who soon joined the parley, to desist from our purpose; which they represented to be like that of rushing into the mouth of a lion, as a French privateer, which was still off the coast, had taken and sunk several vessels that day.

This intelligence introduced my dear companion and myself into a renewal of deep exercise; in which our accompanying friends appeared to participate. Concluding, however, to proceed to the water-side, we remained there for some time in silent retirement of spirit; though standing amidst a number who were waiting our decision. At length being favoured with the springing up of a degree of living faith, I was encouraged to say, "I am willing to go;" to which A. D. added, "And so am I, having only wished to hear thee speak first." We accordingly embarked when it was nearly dark, with a boisterous sea and strong wind, though fair for our course; and were favoured to accomplish our tossing passage safely, in about

eight hours; though not without a short alarm to our accompanying friends, from the supposed approach of the privateer; which proved to be only that of the packet returning from Scilly, which could not effect her passage in less than forty-eight hours.

On being permitted to set our feet on firm ground, after the perils we had been favoured to escape, and the extremity of bodily indisposition which we had endured from the violent motion of the vessel, my spirit was deeply bowed, in contrition and humbling admiration of these mercies, under a sense of my unworthiness of the least of them; and some increase of faith and encouragement was received, to proceed in our arduous line of apprehended duty, amidst many hundreds of strangers of various denominations, professors and profane. With many of each description, we obtained public opportunities of religious communication; visiting every island that was accessible, namely, six; and holding several meetings on the principal one, called St. Mary's; where we received much brotherly kindness from the minister, and other members of the Methodist Society, and very friendly attention also from the clergyman stationed there.

That an open door was administered to us, and to our christian ambassage, by some of every class, and that preservation was signally extended to

us, through many difficulties and dangers, in the course of a perilous navigation in passing from island to island, at such a time of the year, can only be ascribed to Him, who, when he putteth forth his little ones, is pleased to go before them and to be their rereward.

On a retrospect of the exercises, bodily and mental, to which we were exposed in the prosecution of this engagement; and of the providential aid, by which we were safely conducted through them, to its most satisfactory accomplishment; I feel it to be an act of humiliation due from me, to acknowledge, at this distant period, the painful sense, which was soon afterwards awakened in my mind, of the unworthy hesitations, amounting almost to distrust and disobedience, with which I had at length reluctantly yielded to this prospect; because it had not originated in my own mind, but in that of my companion. Though admitted, however, to a true participation in the trials and consolations of the service, I had to undergo my peculiar portion of secret condemnation, during much of my subsequent journeying in Cornwall; before true peace and reconciliation were restored from Him, who, though "he will not always chide nor keep his anger for ever," sees meet to make a sensible distinction, in the distribution of his tender mercies and loving kindness, in favour of the "willing and obedient."

After the accomplishment of many other ministerial engagements, with this dear friend, (A. D.) the state of her health required a temporary cessation from such exertions; previously to which circumstance, a change had taken place in my abode, in consequence of that adopted by my paternal friend, R. R.; who removed from Coalbrook Dale to Bristol, in the year 1804; about one year after the decease of his honourable wife. My beloved sister having become resident at Bath, it became my residence also. Though my dear friend, A. D., so far recovered her impaired health, as to resume her arduous line of ministerial labour, the declining state of my own feeble constitution unfitted me for re-union with her therein.

Becoming thus a member of the Monthly Meeting for the north division of Somersetshire, I was soon made sensible of the requirings of duty to join another dear friend, Susanna Naish, of the same meeting, in a line of engagement, to which my diminished strength was less unequal than that of travelling more rapidly. This was, visiting the families of Friends, wherever our lot should be cast; being the kind of service peculiarly required of her, and for which she was peculiarly gifted.

Our first engagement was that of a visit through the meetings and families of our own county; secondly, those of the city of Bristol, in which we were joined by our deeply-exercised friend and

brother in gospel service, J. K.; and then throughout the principality of Wales.

While my companion and myself were engaged, in the middle of the year 1816, in a visit to the meetings and families constituting the Quarterly Meeting of Middlesex, exclusive of London, we received intelligence of the most sudden decease of dear Ann Dymond; but a sense of divine favour being instantly vouchsafed for my consolation under it, I seemed forbidden to mourn an event, which I believe had proved to her the blessed termination of all labour and conflict; by the introduction of her exercised spirit, into the regions of undefiled rest and everlasting peace. After my final separation, in mutability, from this dear friend, I continued to be accompanied by my friend, S. N. We visited all the counties and places; except some parts of the north of England and Scotland; through which I had previously travelled, and repeated a visit, in conjunction with dear M. Naftel, to the isles of Guernsey and Jersey; which also embraced the appointment and attendance of many public meetings, there and elsewhere.

The fruit of this labour, among some prepared individuals, was more conspicuous than in most instances under my observation. But whether such evidences are afforded to labourers in the Lord's vineyard, or not, those who are concerned to be faithful therein, will be favoured to find this

“work of righteousness to be peace,” and its effect enrichingly compensating for the utmost sacrifices it may require. The period of fifteen years thus occupied, during a part of each, with my companion, S. N., did not pass without some distinguishing events of another class, besides the one last related.

In the year 1809, I shared with his large circle of attached relations, the loss of my truly honourable uncle, David Barclay; who had maintained towards myself, sister, and brother, as well as numerous other branches of his extensive connexions, the character of a wise and tender parent; and as such, I felt his sudden removal; under the consolation of having made him a visit of filial affection, which proved to be the last; his death occurring within two days of my leaving him, without more than a few minutes’ previous indication of its approach, at the age of eighty years. The opportunity of uniting with a large concourse of relations and friends, in attending the favoured solemnity of his interment, was also cause of cordial though mournful satisfaction.

But the year 1816, which had been distinguished, as already related, by the sudden dissolution of A. D., became more eminently so in my experience, by the loss of Richard Reynolds; in whom were united towards me, the important

characters of father, brother, friend, without any tie of consanguinity.

Though I had ceased to denominate his paternal roof my home, having believed it right to become a settled resident at Bath, opportunities of his valuable society were still frequently enjoyed, and the resources of christian friendship continued to be mutually prized and cultivated between us.

A very gradual, though apparent, decline in the state of his health, rendered distant separation from him increasingly repugnant to my feelings; and was not incurred by me, except under the apprehended claims of superior duty.

On taking my leave of him, to proceed on the last-mentioned journey in the neighbourhood of London, which included the attendance of the Yearly Meeting; the impression was more than usually solemn, of the uncertainty attending our future meeting in mutability: yet a little hope, if not faith, was granted to encourage the undertaking. Though my solicitude on this interesting subject was often deeply awakened during absence, yet the sense of that favour which is better than life, was so remarkably afforded in the prosecution of this engagement; and even increasingly, as the accounts received of my invalid friend were calculated to increase anxiety; that I felt bound to continue in my exercising allotment, until made

sensible of the blessed Master's liberation from it ; which occurred at a period, that allowed me rather more than three weeks of the company of my beloved friend. During this time, many precious evidences were afforded us, that his mind was firmly centred in patient faith and humble hope of his abiding interest in redeeming love and mercy. He once said, in reply to an observation made by one of his friends, " My faith and hope and trust are wholly fixed on the love and mercy of God in Christ Jesus."

The loss of this my honoured friend was the commencement of a new and mournfully-distinguished period of my temporal career. Not that I sorrowed as one without hope, nor that an event, which had been dispensed, so evidently under the auspices of a gracious providence, at the advanced probationary term of eighty years, to my departed friend, was calculated to weaken in my estimation, the claims of highest duty remaining to be fulfilled.

My sorrow was deepened, on being shortly followed by the prospect of a more depressing and earnestly-deprecated event, in the long and dangerous illness of my beloved sister ; a dispensation which must have proved in its expected result, the sunset of my enjoyment in temporal existence. But divine mercy was pleased to interpose, to the lightening of this dark cloud ; though not to its

total dispersion from my fearful contemplation, during the last ten years of my life.

Notwithstanding its exercising influence, the summer of 1817 appeared to present a right season for the renewal of my late religious engagement, with dear S. Naish, in the neighbourhood of London ; which being, through divine favour, pursued to its peaceful conclusion, we resumed our home stations ; but only continued to occupy them during those junctures, which intervened between the successive calls of apprehended duty, to be engaged in visiting the meetings and families of Friends in other places. A laborious undertaking of this kind in 1820, through Devonshire and Cornwall, which included also some neighbouring counties, was distinguished by the severe illness of my dear companion, whose life was endangered by it ; and which prevented the entire accomplishment of our prospect. Being permitted to reach home by the end of the year, it was accordingly resumed in the course of the next summer, through Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, and part of Gloucestershire, to an entirely peaceful retreat from the field of united labour.

The health of my dear companion appearing to give way, beyond all prospect of recruit, my next impressive exercise became that of attending her during her illness ; which, in the course of about three weeks, in the spring of 1822, terminated in her dissolution ; and which was followed by a

precious evidence to my soul, that her tribulated but redeemed spirit was centred beyond the reach of sorrow or suffering. This proved to me like the signal of retreat from travelling engagements.

The last thirty or thirty-two years, which comprehended these exercises, was not, however, confined to the company of the three friends only, who were necessarily my most permanent companions therein. While resident at Coalbrook Dale, besides a junction, already mentioned, with R. Young, I was privileged to unite with that highly-endowed servant of the Lord and mother in Israel, Deborah Darby, in the prosecution of her labours of gospel love. These were frequently repeated in neighbouring counties, when not called forth to more distant places, both in the line of public meetings and those of our own Society. Being excellently gifted for every kind of service, she exhibited, as far as it can be predicated of any human instrument, "the beauty of holiness," in an eminent degree. I was also privileged with an opportunity of frequent intercourse with her, during her last illness; in which it was most encouragingly conspicuous, that her lamp burned brightly.

Another occasion of being introduced to an intimate participation in the religious exercises of others, was that of my joining the company of dear Sarah Harrison, of America, Sarah Birkbeck, and Ann Crowley, in a visit to the Isle of Man; and

some years afterward, I united with the last-mentioned friend, in a religious visit through several of the eastern counties, and to the city of Norwich. She being released from a state of service, and of long-continued bodily suffering, before me, it is due to her precious memory to observe, that she had few equals in the constant lively exercise of spirit, which she maintained both at home and abroad; and few or none appeared to have been more distinguished, by the savour of a divine unction, in the exercise of gospel ministry.

With other friends of less conspicuous character, and one now living, of no less eminent endowments, I have also been associated in ministerial labour; and have experienced such instances of dedication to the Master's will, when least congenial with natural inclination, to be enrichingly compensated by the sense of his favour.

At the termination of the life of my long-endearred friend, S. Naish, my own feeble constitution, which had endured, for a course of more than forty years, remarkable infirmity, and during the last fifteen had sustained successive attacks of acute inflammatory disease, chiefly of the pulmonary kind, appeared so decidedly to fail, as to admit only of unfrequent excursions from home, in the attendance of a few Monthly and Quarterly Meetings, and once of the Yearly Meeting; all which, though trials to my bodily state, were justly appreciated

by me as seasons of high value, in the renewal of that precious fellowship and communion, which is, at times, recognised among the living, as being with the Father and the Son, and one with another in him.

I have often had to consider it one among the many providential mercies afforded me, that as the weakness of my constitution began to disqualify me for those extraordinary exposures and exertions, which are incident to the holding of meetings appointed for the public; I was much excused from such a line of service, by one of so different a kind, as that of family visiting. A longer tarriance, in most instances, where our lot was cast, than is otherwise usual with travelling Friends who are not so detained, including the opportunity of attending several sittings of the same meeting in many places; proved the means of a more full and intimate introduction into their state, and of a closer degree of union with the sincerely exercised, than it is probable would have been otherwise so extensively our experience.

A visit of a few weeks to different places, for the benefit of health, being within the compass of particular meetings, or otherwise affording the opportunity of associating with a number of friends, on the first and other days of the week, in the performance of religious worship, are distinguished in my recollection as seasons of blessed

refreshment ; and are strongly contrasted with my present seclusion, of more than three years duration, from the privilege of uniting with my friends in the appointed seasons of public devotion.

It is to be gratefully acknowledged, that the circumstance of being mostly confined to my bed, during twenty hours out of each twenty-four (the greatest part of this time) has had no necessary influence, either in indisposing the mind for communion with the source of blessedness, or even in wholly precluding opportunities of spiritual communication with endeared individuals, in domestic association or as occasional visitors. And favours from the Fountain of all sure mercies, which have been vouchsafed, of this description, are among the foremost which call for the tribute of gratitude ; together with the numerous providential kindnesses, which are also bountifully bestowed ; so that there are times, when I can acknowledge, that not only is my bed *made* in my sickness, to be a place of mental repose and sweet meditation, but a scene of memorable blessings ; where the all-effective balm of the divine physician has been extended to the healing of my diseases, to the forgiving of my iniquities, and to the crowning me “ with loving-kindness and tender mercies.”

Yet is the dispensation also marked with many deep probations ; as though the measure of suffering, the operation of the furnace, so remarkably

instanced in my experience, for sin and disobedience, had not fulfilled its utmost mercifully-designed purpose ; even to the effecting of a full preparation for the abiding enjoyment of those pure pleasures, which are at the Lord's right-hand for evermore.

These are assuredly laid up in store, for all those who love the appearing of the Lord Jesus ; being washed in his most precious blood, and clothed with the garment of his salvation. Through his adorable and unmerited mercy, may this be the blessed consummation of past and future experience ; so that I may be finally qualified to acknowledge, that the sufferings of the present time, whatever be their aggregate portion or extent, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life.

CHAP. VI.

I RESUME the pen in the sixty-eighth year of my age, for the purpose of finishing this my eventful history, up to its present period; eventful, indeed, not so much from any remarkable variety of temporal contingences, as it is from an almost singularly-diversified course of spiritual experience. But while I believe it will be readily acknowledged, by most readers, it is feelingly confessed by myself, to derive from that circumstance no distinguished recommendation; except it be that of serving as a way-mark to others, by which they may avoid the like unappointed depths of bitter conflict; or, having in some degree incurred them, may be encouraged to look toward that good Shepherd, who is mercifully willing to lift from the pit of destruction, those of his sheep, who may have fallen into it; while he sweetly feeds, and gently leads along, those who more faithfully follow him; carrying his lambs in his bosom: and I am much disposed to believe, appoints them also a more distinguished portion, both in his field of acceptable offering, and in his pastures of life and salvation.

In the retrospect of the innumerable mercies and bounties, of an outward nature only, which have

distinguished my temporal course; its extent, as measured by these, appears to constitute what may be accounted, on a comparison with that of many others, a long and prosperous life; yet vicissitude, and uncertainty of possession and enjoyment, are the invariable characteristics of the most favoured earthly portion; and these have been impressively exemplified, in the latter stage of my course.

Among them is chiefly to be noted, the dissolution of many of the strong and tender ties of natural relationship, and most affectionate christian friendship; so far as they can be said to be dissolved, by the removal of their several objects from the present scene of existence. The decease of a beloved mother; of a parental uncle; of several particularly-endearred younger relatives; and of each of those individuals, who had been my most closely-united associates in the love and fellowship of gospel exercise; has formed a remarkable feature in the character of those creaturely privations.

And a succession of travelling exercises, which were terminated by the death of my last dear and constant companion, S. Naish, to whom I became bound in this capacity, for nearly fifteen years; with the breaking up of my own feeble constitution; cannot be supposed to have passed, without many subjects and occasions of profitable meditation and instruction to myself.

At the conclusion of these labours of love, on the part of my dear companion, (S. N.) which became final by her decease in the spring of 1822; my own health appeared so entirely to give way, as to preclude all ability for the pursuance of travelling exercise; except in such a circumscribed line, as might be followed without a certificate.

On a review of the foregoing narrative, I feel, however, no disposition to say with the patriarch Jacob, "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage." For though such a description is not inapplicable to the longest and most prosperous term of human life, singly considered, in a certain sense; yet, when viewed in connexion with the vast interests of eternity, which may be promoted, and are often ultimately secured, under the most adverse and afflictive dispensations of an all-wise, chastening, and sanctifying hand; it assumes a different character. And in this point of view, the preceding pages, while exhibiting the cup of life as mingled with the bitterest ingredients, and the very dregs thereof appointed to be received; yet, as crowned with innumerable mercies and blessings, nevertheless record a proportion of both temporal and spiritual good, bountifully vouchsafed me, which seems greatly to have exceeded the utmost calculation I could reasonably form, of the prosperity of this mortal state; and which claims from my heart, an appropriation of

the grateful language of the psalmist, " Bless the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within me, bless his holy name : bless the Lord, O my soul ; and forget not all his benefits : who forgiveth all thine iniquities ; who healeth all thy diseases ; who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies."

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS ON THE FOREGOING
NARRATIVE.

ON a retrospect of the preceding history, a train of reflection is induced, to which I feel it obligatory to give expression. For even this history is too fruitful of occasions for reflection, to admit the introduction of them in the progress of its details; and it includes many subjects, which claim more extensive contemplation and a more correct delineation of their instructive result, than could have been admitted into the narrative, without too great an interruption. Its prominent impression, indeed, can be no less, on the mind of the writer or of the reader, than the immeasurable love and mercy of the God of all grace, in overruling every adverse circumstance; in supplying every existing deficiency, so far as the highest purposes were dependent on it; in counteracting every evil influence, that was permitted to interpose amidst the dispensations of his providence: and which immeasurable love and mercy, as manifested in and through Christ Jesus, are yet more eminently displayed in restoring the soul, and leading in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake, one, who had wandered far from the fold of rest and peace, into the knowledge of which she had been early introduced, often mercifully recalled, and finally

reconducted, after it had seemed to be for ever hid from her eyes.

The dangers of a defective education, even amidst the blessing of much parental culture and wholesome discipline; present themselves to notice, as requiring more effectual guard and sedulous counteraction from human instrumentality, than was extended to the subject of this memoir. Although it is a settled principle in her mind, that a tender and christian love, in checking every appearance of evil propensity in the disposition and conduct of childhood and youth, is the fundamental business of right education; and though, without it, religious instruction is much like sowing among thorns; yet the latter should keep its due place with the former; the spiritual understanding should be fed with food convenient for it, as well as the spiritual affections awakened and encouraged, on every opportunity of observing or calling them forth; while the productions of corrupt nature, and the exuberances and excesses of that which may be comparatively innocent, should be suppressed, regulated, and controlled. The most religiously-concerned parents, as well as those who desire to prove themselves such, may be often dismayed, under a sense of their insufficiency for such good words and works, as the interesting object may require. But while a principle of religious duty, and true parental affection, animate their sincere,

however feeble, endeavours to be found faithful to the charge committed to them; let them also humbly confide, that He, who gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater (though it be committed to instrumental cultivation) is able and graciously willing to nourish the seed sown, whether in an immediate or instrumental manner; and to bless the springing thereof: and, indeed, where ability or opportunity of human cultivation fails, to supply the want of it, so far as shall be essential to the highest interests of an immortal spirit. Yet if parents and guardians of youth neglect their proper trust, in a vain confidence that the work may be accomplished without their mediation, or without the exercise of living aspirations to the Giver of every good and perfect gift, for his effectual blessing; they will assuredly fail of that peace, which is, sooner or later, the enriching reward of every labour of love and work of faith: whereas, however they might fail of the apparent success of their best endeavours, it may surely be affirmed of truly conscientious labourers, in every department of the Lord's vineyard, that their record is on high, and their judgment with their God.

MEDITATIONS AND REFLECTIONS, 1822.

IF the retrospect of those external changes, to which human nature is invariably incident, in the dissolution of its most endeared earthly ties, exhibits a mournful picture of the instability of the utmost created good, though accompanied with its appropriate consolations, and attended with its animating encouragements; so an intimate review of spiritual vicissitudes and diversified experience, may tend to establish a salutary though uninviting truth, which cannot be too deeply exemplified in practice; viz. that the most acceptable state, which we can hope to attain on this side eternity, is rather that of a continually-increasing capacity, both to do and to suffer according to the will of God, than a state of uninterrupted enjoyment in the pure light of Life; or of the constantly prosperous exercise of those gifts and endowments, with which it may have pleased divine wisdom to entrust us: thus, in patient well-doing, committing ourselves into the hand of a faithful Creator; willing to become a whole burnt-offering to his glory. But this is a lesson, which nothing short of progressive experience is likely to enforce; or prove sufficient to convince the often-humbled and almost fainting spirit, that a condition, in which it

can perceive no comeliness, nothing worthy the regard of God or man, can be that which, in his own time, the Lord will delight to bless; if not in the view of our fellow-creatures, yet with the honour that cometh only from himself; the sense of his loving-kindness; the covering of the robe of his righteousness; without which, we cannot stand before him with acceptance: and this he will afford to those, who are made rightly sensible of their entire destitution without it, and yet are enabled to confide, that through the efficacy of redeeming love, they may finally join the just of all generations.

MEDITATION IN MY SICKNESS WHILE AT BRISTOL,
10th Month, 1824.

I HAVE compared myself to a worm of the earth, working its hidden way through dark subterraneous passages; encountering numerous difficulties, oppositions, and dangers; wounded, perhaps, by many secret enemies; yet, guided by natural instinct, still tending towards the surface and the light of this world. Thus has my imprisoned spirit been struggling with many difficulties; grappling in its own weakness, with many potent enemies, through the dark, discouraging, and, at

times, dismaying influences of painful disease and depressing bodily infirmities: yet, being secretly and mercifully guided by a *divine instinct* (often imperceptible to itself) it is once more favoured to approach the regions of spiritual light, and to be sensible of some of the salutary beams of “the Sun of Righteousness;” although he be not yet fully *arisen* with healing in his wings. Oh! may his divine and all-restoring virtue continue to be mercifully extended; not only to the relief and renovation of the frail tabernacle, as it now appears to be, in an unthought-of degree; but far more abundantly, to the effectual eradication of the maladies of the soul, and the bringing it into a capacity of being safely intrusted, solaced, and enriched, with the consolations and the joys of his salvation.

Since writing the foregoing, yesterday, the balm of that consolation, which is better than life; the sense of that divine presence, in which alone there is fulness of joy; has been bountifully afforded me; so that I am once more qualified, in a state of great bodily weakness, to adopt the language of the psalmist, “My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.” Amen! and Amen! saith my soul.

PRISCILLA HANNAH GURNEY.

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